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SERMONS

BY

SAMUEL OGDEN, D. D.

SERMONS

BY Sam'l. Miller.

SAMUEL OGDEN, D. D.

LATE WOODWARDIAN PROFESSOR IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

AN ACCOUNT OF THE AUTHOR'S LIFE AND WRITINGS,

BY

Dr. HALLIFAX, BISHOP OF GLOUCESTER.

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DR. SAMUEL OGDEN, the learned Author of the following Volume, was born on the 28th day of July in the year 1716, at Manchester in the County of Lancaster, and educated at the Free School there.

In March 1733, he was admitted in King's College in Cambridge, and, in August 1736, he removed to St. John's College in the same University; where, in 1737, he took the Degree of B. A. and, on the 24th of March 1739, was elected Fellow.

He was ordained Deacon at Chester by the Bishop of Chester, in June 1740; and Priest at Bugden in Huntingdonshire by the Bishop of Lincoln, in November 1741. In this year also he took the Degree of M. A.

In 1744, he was elected Master of the Free Grammar School at Halifax in Yorkshire, and by Dr. Legh, the late Vicar there, was appointed first to the Curacy of Coley, and afterwards to that of Elland, both in the neighbourhood; which latter Curacy he continued to hold to the end of the year 1762.

In 1748, he became B. D.

In March 1753, he resigned his School at Halifax, and went to reside at Cambridge; and at

at the enſuing Commencement in July, was created D. D. The late Duke of Newcaſtle, Chancellor of the Univerſity, happening to viſit Cambridge at the laſt of the above times, Mr. Ogden was fixed upon to perform before his Grace the Exerciſe appointed by the Statutes for the Degree of Doctor of Divinity. The Queſtion propoſed by Mr. Ogden, and on which he made his Theſis, was,

Chriſtum, ipſum inſontem, a Deo ad mortem datum eſſe pro ſontibus, eſt credibile.

That, choſen by the Profeſſor, Dr. Green, the late Biſhop of Lincoln, was,

Præſcientia Divina, et futuræ improborum pœnæ, cum rectâ ratione non pugnant.

The Diſpute was carried on with the higheſt elegance and ſpirit, on both ſides: And the Reſpondent, in particular, acquitted himſelf ſo well in this literary conteſt, that the Duke very ſoon after was pleaſed to preſent him to the Vicarage of Damerham in Wiltſhire, in his Grace's private Patronage; which preferment was the more acceptable, as the Living was tenable with his Fellowſhip. Dr. Ogden took an early occaſion of publickly expreſſing his gratitude to his Noble Patron for ſo honourable a mark of his favour, in a handſome Dedication prefixed to Two Sermons, preached before the Univerſity on the 29th of May and the 22d of June, in 1758.

In 1764, he was appointed Woodwardian Profeſſor.

In

In 1766, he obtained the conſent of the Duke of Newcaſtle to exchange the Living of Damerham for the Rectory of Stansfield, in Suffolk, in the Preſentation of the Lord Chancellor; and in the month of June of the ſame year, he was preſented to the Rectory of Lawford, in Eſſex, by the Maſter and Fellows of St. John's College: which two Livings, together with his Profeſſorſhip, he held to his death.

He died on the 22d day of March 1778, in the 62d year of his Age; and was buried in the Pariſh Church of *The Holy Sepulchre* in Cambridge; where he had preached for ſeveral years after his return to College in 1753, and was conſtantly attended by a numerous audience, conſiſting principally of the younger members of the Univerſity.

The Edition of his Works, now ſubmitted to the publick, contains a Summary of Chriſtian Faith and Practice; exhibiting, in detail, a complete ſyſtem of all that is neceſſary to believe and do, in a way that is calculated at once to inform the underſtanding and to reach the heart. If the ſubjects of the following Sermons be common, and have been often handled by other Writers; the ſtile and compoſition of the Author are peculiarly his own. In his mode of delivery there was ſomething remarkably ſtriking, which commanded the attention of all who heard him: and the arguments adduced, to ſupport and illuſtrate the great doctrines of Natural and Revealed Religion, are

ſo

ſo diſpoſed, that few readers, it is preſumed, can be found, who will not feel the force of them.

In common life, there was a real or apparent ruſticity attending his addreſs, which diſguſted thoſe who were ſtrangers to his character. But this prejudice ſoon wore off, as the intimacy with him increaſed: and notwithſtanding the ſternneſs and even ferocity he would ſometimes throw into his countenance, he was in truth one of the moſt humane and tender-hearted men I have known.

To his relations, who wanted his aſſiſtance, he was remarkably kind, in his life, and in the legacies left them at his death. His Father and Mother, who both lived to an extreme old age, the former dying at the age of 75 and the latter at that of 85, owed almoſt their whole ſupport to his piety. Soon after the death of his Father in the year 1766, he wrote a Latin Epitaph to his memory, and cauſed it to be fixed, at his own expenſe, on a marble tablet, in the Collegiate Church in Mancheſter; a copy of which the curious reader will not be diſpleaſed to ſee.

M. S.

M. S.
THOMÆ OGDEN
Mancunienſis,
Indole generoſâ,
Moribus ſuaviſſimis,
Sermonis comitate, lepore, modeſtiâ,
Cæteriſque humanioribus virtutibus adornati;
Eminente inter alias pietate,
Primum erga parentes,
Quos ætate confectos,
E pluribus natis minimus,
Ad ſe recepit, obſervavit, extulit;
Deinde erga filium unicum,
SAMUELEM OGDEN,
Quem tractavit educavitque liberaliſſimè;
Qui viciſſim illi
Non meritis parem,
Lubenti certè animo,
Gratiam referebat,

Obiit Anno Dom. 1766.
Ætat. 75.

During

During the latter part of Dr. Ogden's life, he laboured under much ill health. About a year before he died, he was ſeized with a paralytic fit as he was ſtepping into his chariot, and was judged to be in immediate and extreme danger. The chearfulneſs with which he ſuſtained this ſhock, and the indifference with which he gave the neceſſary orders on the event of his diſſolution, which ſeemed to be then ſo near, were ſuch as could only be aſcribed to a mind, perfectly reſigned to the diſpoſals of providence, and full of the hopes of happineſs in a better ſtate. A ſecond return of the ſame diſorder, which after the firſt attack he daily expected, proved fatal.

It may be neceſſary to add, that the Five Sermons *On the Lord's Supper*, now firſt printed, had been prepared and tranſcribed for the preſs by the Author, a little before his death: they carry about them the marks of their own genuineneſs, and no one, at all acquainted with Dr. Ogden's *manner*, will have any doubts concerning their authenticity.

S. HALLIFAX.

SERMONS

ON THE EFFICACY OF PRAYER AND INTERCESSION.

ON THE ARTICLES OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

SERMON I.

MATTH. vii. 7.

Aſk, and it ſhall be given you.

THE huſbandman, deſirous of a crop in the time of harveſt, betakes himſelf to the uſe of ſuch means as have been found to anſwer: He turns his field with the ableſt hands, he adds the richeſt manure; though he knows not, and will modeſtly own he knows not, why the acceſſion of ſuch foreign matter, or the breaking of a clod is ſo indiſpenſably neceſſary to the propagation of a grain of barley.

But we, who ſhould teach you to cultivate that more valuable part of your poſſeſſions, the mind, and gather *fruit unto life eternal*, are apt to talk in a higher ſtrain; and not apprehending any danger of experiments in this caſe to confute us, at leaſt for the preſent, we lay down our deciſions with the greater confidence. We expatiate on the ideas of rectitude and obligation, free-will and fate, and ſubſtance, corporeal, ſpiritual, and everlaſting; till the

world and it's adorable Author, his attributes and eſſence, his power and rights and *duty* (I tremble to pronounce the word) be all brought together to be judged before us; who ſtand, like infants, in admiration of the paper-fabrick we have raiſed, and ſee the univerſal frame of nature within the little lines which we have drawn in the duſt.

Not that ſpeculations on ſuch ſubjects are in themſelves wrong: then alone they become dangerous, when carried to exceſs; when they engage perhaps too much of our attention; when in proportion as our light fails us, our preſumption increaſes; when we grow fond of erecting ſyſtems and theories; when we are no longer in ignorance or doubt on any point, nor know things any more in parts, but all things univerſally, with all their relations to every other ſubject, and as they make a part of the whole; when we will leave nothing unexplained; and in one word, when we lay greater ſtreſs on theſe notions of our own, than on the univerſal ſenſe, and general ſentiments, and maxims of mankind.

Indeed, the conſequences of theſe conceits in Religion, and of this vain Philoſophy, are not always ſo bad in fact, as might be apprehended from the abſurdity of them. Common ſenſe and nature, though diſtorted by this violence, are making continual efforts to recover their bent and figure, and prevail frequently in practice againſt any theory. Juſt as, alas! on the other hand, natural temper and paſſion

exert

exert themſelves with great power againſt the beſt arguments, and gain daily victories over well grounded reſolutions, and the lawful authority of the ſtricteſt reaſon.

Among other ſubjects, that of PRAYER has ſuffered from the indiſcreet endeavours that have been uſed to explain it.

The Scripture ſaith, *Aſk, and it ſhall be given you.* The plain meaning of which words muſt ſurely be, That Almighty God may be moved by Prayer. Now if it ſhould happen, that we cannot well explain how this is done, it may ſtill be true: and if we have laid down ſuch laws for the regulation of the Divine Government, as will not admit this doctrine, we muſt alter them till they will.

If indeed we *aſk amiſs*, that is, with a deſign to conſume the divine gifts upon our luſts, the Scripture tells us, that this will hinder the efficacy of our prayers; nay, that *the prayer of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord.*

Should we even pray without this evil deſign, or with a very good one; ſtill there may be many reaſons, why we may not obtain that which we pray for. It might not be truly good for us, however ardently we deſire it; it might be injurious or detrimental to other perſons, or creatures, in a manner of which we have no ſuſpicion, or even idea; it might oppoſe ſome of the rules of Divine Government, of which we know little; or be even a thing impoſſible, when we fancy it the eaſieſt.

Yet we are not therefore to conclude, that even theſe prayers are loſt and uſeleſs, becauſe they are ſo far unſucceſsful. They may obtain for us other bleſſings inſtead of that which we deſired, and perhaps greater and better: the piety and faith that are expreſt in our prayers, whatever errour we may have fallen into concerning the ſubject of them, muſt be acceptable to our heavenly Father, and tend to procure for us higher degrees of his favour, itſelf the greateſt of all bleſſings, according to the Pſalmiſt, *Thy loving kindneſs is better than the life itſelf.* And Prayer, as it is the exerciſe of a devout temper and diſpoſition, will naturally increaſe in us that diſpoſition, and make us more religious and better men.

This laſt conſideration, as it is of great weight, ſo is it alſo of a very large extent; there being no faulty temper of mind, but what may be brought to the teſt and corrected by devotion; nor any part of the character of a good man, which by this exerciſe may not be made better.

While you *give thanks* to Almighty God your heavenly Father for all the inſtances of his liberality and mercy; acknowledging that you owe to him your life, and health, and all things; that you have deſerved nothing from him but puniſhment, while he is loading you with benefits; that every moment of comfort in your life is the gift of him, againſt whom you have committed ſo many offences; that he watches over you, when you think not of him; and, when you knowingly diſpleaſe him, he is ready

to

to forgive; that he has given up his own and only begotten Son, who was in the bosom and glory of the Father, to a life of pain and sorrow, and a death of ignominy and anguish, that you might be freed from the punishment justly due to your evil deeds, and be made happy and glorious to all eternity with himself in heaven; while you give him thanks in this manner for his goodness, your hearts, surely, must burn within you with the sense of it; if you were not thankful before, such thanksgivings must make you so: they will beget that pious disposition in you, from which these thoughts might naturally flow, till your minds and words devoutly accord with each other, and you feel all the sentiments of gratitude and love which you express.

Or when you apply to your heavenly Father for *mercy and forgiveness*; deploring your manifold violations of his holy laws; taking shame for your own weakness, folly, depravity; acknowledging not only his dominion over you, and absolute right to your most entire obedience, but the purity and excellence of his commands, in themselves most equitable, productive of good to all, necessary for your own welfare, for your health, peace, prosperity, and honour, and for the enjoyment of your own mind within, banishing the terror of death, filling the heart with hope and assurance, and leading to everlasting felicity; when you confess your offences against such laws as these, and yet beg to be forgiven by him who seeth the heart,

and

and is both a witneſs and avenger of hypocriſy and falſehood; and when you plead with the Father through the merits and interceſſion of his Son, who ſuffered willingly for your ſins, and was offered for you a ſacrifice to God upon the Croſs; when you do this, you take the moſt effectual method to make yourſelf a fit object of the divine mercy and forgiveneſs. Every one of theſe ſentiments, which you thus breathe forth in his preſence, is reverberated back upon your own breaſt, and melts it down into repentance, and amendment.

It appears then, that prayer is an employment of the greateſt uſe, having a natural tendency to amend the heart; and by conſequence, it is a moſt important and neceſſary part of the duty of every perſon.

Though this be indeed true, and ſufficient to ſatisfy the moſt ſcrupulous, that prayer is not a mere ceremonial, ſerving but to ſooth the ſuperſtitious, amuſe the ignorant, or employ the idle; but on the contrary, a reaſonable ſervice, and one of the natural means of moral and religious improvement; yet it doth not ſeem to be the whole account of this ſubject, nor even the moſt obvious way of conſidering it. Theſe advantages of prayer, however conſiderable, ariſe from it indirectly, and as it were by reflection. Certainly, when a plain Chriſtian retires to his cloſet to beg the bleſſing of his Maker, the alteration which his prayer will make in his own mind is not the effect he thinks of, or expects from his devotions.

Nay,

Nay, if this be indeed all that he is to expect, and he be made to comprehend it; the diſcovery, it is very poſſible, may be attended with inconvenience, a diminution of that very advantage which is ſuppoſed to be his only one. The earneſtneſs of his prayers may be checked, by the recollection of the deſign of them; and his fervor cooled, by the very conſciouſneſs that he is only endeavouring to excite it.

There is ſomething delicate in the nature of the affections and paſſions; which are found ready enough to raiſe, and exert themſelves in all their ſtrength upon the appearance of their proper objects: they wait for no other ſignal; but are each in order in their ſtations, and prepared to execute the parts allotted them in the œconomy of nature. But if there is any apprehenſion of deſign or art, any ſuſpicion, as it were, ſpread among them of an intention to draw them out for other purpoſes than their own; they become reſerved and backward, cold and lifeleſs in their operations; and, in ſhort, diſcover in every reſpect the ſymptoms of an unwilling obedience.

A ſtudied, affected, fictitious paſſion betrays itſelf even to the by-ſtanders: and much more muſt it be known, ſurely, to my own heart, whether I feel a ſentiment ſpringing up naturally within me, or am only labouring artificially and deceitfully to excite it.

SER-

SERMON II.

MATTH. vii. 7.

Ask, and it shall be given you: Seek, and ye shall find.

YOU may remember a little ancient fable to the following purpose. An old man upon his death bed, said to his sons as they stood round him, I am possessed, my dear children, of a treasure of great value, which, as it is fit, must now be yours: They drew nearer: Nay, added the sick man, I have it not here in my hands; it is deposited somewhere in my fields; dig, and you will be sure to find. They followed his directions, though they mistook his meaning. Treasure of gold or silver there was none; but by means of this extraordinary culture, the land yielded in the time of harvest such an abundant crop, as both rewarded them for their obedience to their parent, and at the same time explained the nature of his command.

Our Father, who is in heaven, hath commanded us in our wants to apply to him in prayer, with an assurance of success: *ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find.*

Now,

Now, it is certain that without his immediate interpoſition, were his ear *heavy*, as the ſcripture phraſe is, *that he could not hear*; there is a natural efficacy in our prayers themſelves to work in our minds thoſe graces and good diſpoſitions which we beg of the Almighty, and by conſequence to make us fitter objects of his mercy. Thus it is, that we *aſk, and receive*; *we ſeek*, and, like the children of the ſagacious old huſbandman, *find* alſo the very thing which we were ſeeking, though in another form: our petitions produce in fact the good effects which we deſired, though not in the manner which we ignorantly expected.

But yet, allowing this conſideration its full force, there is no neceſſity of ſtopping here, and confining the power of prayer to this ſingle method of operation. Does the clear aſſurance of its uſe in this way preclude the hopes of every other advantage? Muſt we needs be made acquainted with all the efficacy of every thing that is our duty, and know the whole ground and reaſon of all the actions which Almighty God can poſſibly require of us?

When the Iſraelites under the conduct of Joſhua were commanded, upon hearing the ſound of the trumpet, to ſhout *with a great ſhout*; *and the wall fell down flat, ſo that the people went up into the city, every man ſtraight before him, and they took the city*; was the reaſon of this command, and the operation of the means to be made uſe of, underſtood by all

all that were concerned? Was it the undulation of the air, think you, the phyſical effect of many concurrent voices, that overthrew the walls of Jericho? or, ſuppoſe the people were commanded to ſhout in token of their Faith; (for it was *by faith*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *that the walls of Jericho fell down*;) which way is it that Faith operates in the performance of ſuch wonders?

You will ſay, no doubt, that theſe were wonders, and the caſe miraculous; and that we are not from ſuch extraordinary events to draw concluſions concerning the general duties of Chriſtianity.

The drought, that was in the land of Iſrael in the time of Elijah, I ſuppoſe no one will deny to have been miraculous. Yet we have the authority of an Apoſtle to conclude from it in general, that good men's petitions are efficacious and powerful. *Elias was a man ſubject to like paſſions as we are, and he prayed earneſtly that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the ſpace of three years and ſix months.* What is this brought to prove? That *the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.* And this is the Apoſtle's argument? The prayer of the Prophet produced firſt a famine, and then plenty in all the land of Iſrael; and if you, Chriſtians, exerciſe yourſelves in confeſſion and prayer, the diſpoſition of your minds will be the better for your devotions.

But

But the prayer, concerning which St. James is ſpeaking, may ſeem to you to belong to the ſame claſs with that of Elijah, and to be the prayer of men that could work *miracles*.

Hear another Apoſtle: *Be careful for nothing*; *but in every thing by prayer and ſupplication with thankſgiving*, *let your requeſts be made known unto God*. The plaineſt places in the Scripture will be myſteries, if the ſenſe be this, that we can expect no help from God in our diſtreſſes; but may try, by acts of devotion, to bring our own minds to a ſtate of reſignation and contentment.

Give us this day our daily bread. Not a ſparrow falls to the ground without your Father. The hairs of your head are numbered. Can the meaning of all this be, That God Almighty made the world; that it is not to be altered; and we muſt take the beſt care we can of ourſelves, while we live in it?

King Agrippa, *believeſt thou the Prophet?* ſaid the great Apoſtle, arguing with equal ſolidity and eloquence in defence of that capital doctrine, The reſurrection of our Lord from the dead. He deſired no other conceſſion, than the belief of the Scripture: on this foundation he undertook to erect the whole fabrick of Chriſtianity.

Do you believe the Scriptures? If not; it is to no purpoſe to ſtand diſputing concerning the duty of Prayer, or any other duty commanded in the Goſpel. We muſt rather return back to the firſt principles of religion, and

and lay again, as the ſame Apoſtle ſpeaks, the foundation of *faith towards God.*

But there is no occaſion for this: you are deſirous to go on to perfection; admitting the truth of Chriſtianity, and believing the Scripture to be the word of God.

The Scriptures teach you, that our Lord Chriſt being crucified, dead, and buried, the third day he roſe again from the dead. Now this is a great and aſtoniſhing *miracle:* it is a thing of which we have no experience: it is againſt all our rules and obſervations; and directly contrary to the eſtabliſhed order of the world, and the courſe of nature. Yet you believe this.

The Scriptures alſo tell you, that hereafter your own bodies in like manner ſhall be raiſed from the grave, and ſtand before the judgement-ſeat of Chriſt. This event too, whenever it ſhall take place, will ſurely be another moſt amazing miracle, brought about by no rules or laws that are made known to us, or ever fell within the limits of our obſervation and experience. Yet we believe it; and live, or ſhould do, under the influence of this perſuaſion.

The ſame Scripture to which we give credit, while it records paſt miracles, is equally intituled to our aſſent, when it predicts, as in this inſtance, miracles to come.

Suppoſe then the Scriptures were to acquaint us, that there are miracles performed at this preſent time; but either at ſuch a diſtance from

from us, or elſe in ſuch a latent manner, that we could not know by experience, whether they were wrought or no; ſtill there could be no room to doubt: a ready aſſent muſt be yielded to ſuch a revelation by all who believe the Scriptures.

Now if the Goſpel teach us doctrines, from which the exiſtence of theſe miracles may be inferred; or if it command duties, in which theſe interpoſitions of Providence are ſuppoſed or implied; it does enough to prove the reality of them, though we ſee them not, any more than we ſee yet the reſurrection of the dead; or, than we did ever behold any of thoſe miracles, which were performed by our Lord when he was here on earth.

There appears to be no difficulty in this matter, to thoſe who believe that any miracles were ever wrought, that is, who believe the Scriptures to be true; nor any inducement or occaſion to put ourſelves to trouble in giving hard interpretations of texts, or forced and unnatural explications of any part of our duty, in order to avoid, what can be no impediment in the way of a Chriſtian, the acknowledgement of God's government and providence, his particular interpoſition, and continual operation; as it is written, *my Father worketh hitherto, and I work.*

How magnificent is this idea of God's government! That he inſpects the whole and every part of his Univerſe every moment; and orders it according to the counſels of his infinite wiſdom and goodneſs, by his omnipotent will!

whoſe

whoſe thought is power; and his acts ten thouſand times quicker than the light; unconfuſed in a multiplicity exceeding number, and unwearied through eternity!

How much comfort and encouragement to all good and devout perſons are contained in this thought! That Almighty God, as he hath his eye continually upon them, ſo he is employed conſtantly in directing, in *doing* what is beſt for them. Thus may they be ſure, indeed, that *all things work together for their good.* They may have the comfort of underſtanding all the promiſes of God's protection, in their natural, full, and perfect ſenſe, not ſpoiled by that *Philoſophy* which is *vain deceit. The Lord is*, truly, *their ſhepherd*; not leaving them to chance or fate, but watching over them himſelf, and *therefore can they lack nothing.*

What a fund of encouragement is here, as for all manner of virtue and piety, that we may be fit objects of God's gracious care and providence, ſo particularly for devotion! when we can reflect, that every petition of a good man is heard and regarded by him, who holds the reins of nature in his hand. When God, from his throne of celeſtial glory, iſſues out that uncontroulable command to which all events are ſubject, even your deſires, humble pious Chriſtians, are not overlooked or forgotten by him. The good man's prayer is among the reaſons, by which the Omnipotent is moved in the adminiſtration of the Univerſe.

How

How little is all earthly greatneſs! how low and impotent the proudeſt monarchs, if compared with the pooreſt perſon in the world, that leads but a good life! For their influence, even in their higheſt proſperity, is only among weak men, like themſelves; and not ſeldom their deſigns are blaſted from heaven for the inſolence of thoſe that formed them: *Is not this great Babylon, that I have built by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majeſty? While the word was in the King's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, ſaying, the Kingdom is departed from thee.* But the poor man's prayer pierceth the clouds; and, weak and contemptible as he ſeems, he can draw down the hoſt of heaven, and arm the Almighty in his defence, ſo long as he is able only to utter his wants, or can but turn the thought of his heart to God.

SER-

SERMON III.

ACTS xvii. 27, 28.

That they ſhould ſeek the Lord, if haply they might feel after, and find him; though he be not far from every one of us: for in him we live, and move and have our being.

THERE ſeems to be a tincture of the Epicurean doctrine, unobſerved, perhaps, by themſelves, in the notion of thoſe perſons who tell us, that it is a more excellent and godlike thing to create a world that ſhall be able to ſubſiſt of itſelf, and perform, unaſſiſted, every intended operation, than to produce ſuch a ſyſtem as calls for the continual interpoſition of it's Creator.

It is convenient, indeed, for *man* to have his little works ſubſiſt without his help; becauſe he cannot help them without difficulty, and expenſe, and often not at all, as in diſtant places at the ſame moment: his attention is care, and his work labour: he is oppreſſed with weight, and diſtracted by variety. But to apply theſe ideas to God's government of his rational creatures, is ſurely to diſhonour both Him and them: it is at the ſame time to degrade the freedom of their will to mechaniſm, and to aſcribe their imperfections to the Almighty.

If

If there be no trouble, diſturbance, or difficulty to the Godhead in interpoſing in the affairs of men; why ſhould we queſtion his agency? or be ſo anxious to eaſe him of what is no burden?

But do you ſuppoſe, that the ſupreme Being is continually working miracles?

The Scripture ſuppoſes, or rather aſſerts, that he is not an unconcerned or indolent ſpectator of what paſſes in his world: *can any hide himſelf in ſecret places, that I ſhall not ſee him, ſaith the Lord? do not I fill heaven and earth, ſaith the Lord? The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers. The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth them, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. He keepeth all his bones, ſo that not one of them is broken. It is the ſame God that worketh all in all.* But which of his works you will pleaſe to call *miraculous*, is a point which, after all, may depend upon yourſelves.

For, ſuppoſing a courſe of nature carried on according to general laws; if you call every act of Divine interpoſition *a miracle*, it is admitted that theſe interpoſitions obtained by prayer are miracles.

But if you name only thoſe acts miraculous, by which the ſupreme Being cauſes, in the courſe of nature, an alteration diſcernible to men; then you ſee, on the other hand, that his interpoſitions are not always miraculous; and then only become ſo, when they are to be known and diſtinguiſhed.

Nor is it inconceivable that there ſhould be innumerable events of a *middle* nature, I mean ſuch, concerning which it cannot be *known*, but is left to be *conjectured*, with more or leſs probability, as the caſe may be, whether they are, or are not, the effects of the particular will of the Almighty, changing or directing the courſe of nature.

For his Works bend not at our preſence; but go forward in their own train, regardleſs of human praiſe or cenſure; and being the offſpring of Wiſdom, are content to be judged by folly.

Or poſſibly, it may be the very *intention* of the Author of all things, and a particular purpoſe of his, to keep theſe acts of his Providence in the degree of uncertainty in which they appear; as for reaſons known to himſelf, ſo alſo for the better conduct of his moral government over us; in the ſame manner as in many other material points, he neither inſtructs us with certainty, nor yet leaves us wholly ignorant.

And as to this *courſe of nature*, of which we hear ſo much, we are in abſolute and utter ignorance concerning the manner in which it is formed: it conſiſts, perhaps, of continual and yet diſtinct acts of the ſupreme Being, proceeding every one from a perfect free-will, and the moſt deliberate choice; ſo that thoſe, which we call the moſt miraculous interpoſitions, may be no way diſtinguiſhable, in the cauſe, from the moſt ordinary events, but

but only in the novelty of the appearance to us.

Or perhaps, on the contrary, (for theſe ſuppoſitions are thus multiplied, to ſhew on every ſide the amazing extent of our ignorance, ſtretched out like a dark thick miſt to an infinite diſtance, and covering the Univerſe with an impenetrable veil;) as we know not how any thing is done from its beginning, and can ſee but a few of the links neareſt us in that chain, which reaches from everlaſting to everlaſting; who may take upon him to ſay, that the *courſe of nature* itſelf, though carried on with the moſt perfect uniformity, and without freſh interpoſitions of Divine Power, might not be ſeen to comprehend, could we view a larger portion of it, what we now eſteem the greateſt miracles? The ſhooting up of a plant, in the eye of ſuperiour Beings, may be not more *natural*, than the Reſurrection of the dead.

Let us then, at length, be wiſe enough to acknowledge our ignorance of the ways of God; and leave theſe dark diſquiſitions, in which they who are not only ignorant but vain, *feel after*, but never *find him, though he be not far from every one of us. The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him; yea, all ſuch as call upon him faithfully.* How little ſoever they comprehend either of his nature, or his operations, they are ſure not only of his preſence, but protection. *He will fulfil the deſire of them that fear him; he alſo will hear*

their cry, and will help them; whether viſible or no, effectually; either by means that mix themſelves unobſerved with the courſe of events, as the ſmall drops of rain are mingled imperceptibly with the current; or elſe, deſcending with ſuch abundant marks of his power and preſence, that all men that ſee it, may ſay, *This hath God done*; *for they ſhall perceive that it is his work.*

What ſentiments of tenderneſs, admiration, and humility, ought we to feel, when we reflect, that the great Lord of the univerſe deigns to lend an attentive ear to the ſupplications of men! that he conſiders their wants and deſires; and will do that which is beſt, and beſt for *them*; perhaps, what they aſk; if not, what they would aſk, if they knew what he knows!

And not only good men; *ſinners* alſo may hence conceive hopes ſuitable to their ſtate; and encouragement, not to continue in their ſins, but to repent of them, and call earneſtly upon God for mercy and forgiveneſs: ſince he is ready to hear and to pardon; both to remit to them the eternal puniſhment of their ſins in the world to come, and to ſuſpend, avert, or turn into bleſſings the preſent judgments, which he had prepared, and denounced againſt them.

Yet forty days, and Nineveh ſhall be overthrown. But the people believed God, and proclaimed a faſt, and put on ſackcloth, and cried mightily unto God. And God ſaw their works, that

that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil that he had ſaid that he would do unto them, and he did it not.

There can be no doubt, but that virtue tends naturally to the proſperity and eſtabliſhment of a ſtate, and vice to its deſtruction: and is that cold maxim, think you, all that can be learnt from this aſtoniſhing event? Publick vices are frequently found to be detrimental to civil ſocieties: was this all that the prophet Jonah had to deliver, when he cried, *Yet forty days, and Nineveh ſhall be overthrown?* And a reformation of manners is, generally ſpeaking, and all things conſidered, of uſe towards the preſervation of a community: was this the wiſe philoſophical reflection made by the King, when he *aroſe from his throne, and laid his robe from him, and covered him with ſackcloth, and ſat in aſhes, and ſaid, Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we periſh not?*

Or is not the true meaning of this hiſtory, that which is alſo the moſt obvious? That Almighty God, in his juſtice and goodneſs, offended firſt with the ſins of the people of Nineveh, had decreed and prepared for them an exemplary puniſhment; and then moved by their repentance and prayer, put a ſtop to the execution of it. *God repented of the evil that he had ſaid that he would do unto them, and he did it not.* The puniſhment, had it been inflicted, would have been the effect of his diſpleaſure:

pleaſure: it was averted or delayed by the interpoſition of his mercy.

SERMON IV.

LUKE xi. 8.

Though he will not riſe and give him, becauſe he is his friend; yet, becauſe of his importunity, he will riſe and give him as many as he needeth.

WHENCE ariſes the mighty merit of Prayer, if this be the recommendation ſo particularly powerful? *Aſk, and ye ſhall receive:* Why are we not rather commanded to *labour*, that we may *deſerve?* Or how, in ſhort, ſhall we reconcile God's undoubted regard to *deſert*, with the conceſſions he is repreſented as making to *importunity?*

This may deſerve to be conſidered: for though Almighty God be the maſter of his own favours; and free, ſurely, to beſtow them whereſoever he pleaſes, without aſſigning to any one a reaſon, beſides his own will; according to that of the houſholder in the parable, *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?* and though, whenever he has been pleaſed

ſed to annex any conditions to be performed on our part, or appoint means to be uſed, as prayer, or any other, we have no choice left, but to comply, and be thankful; yet when we are able to go further, and can diſcern, in ſome degree, the reaſons on which ſuch divine appointments are grounded, our meditations will be well and profitably employed on ſuch a ſubject. The wiſdom of the ſupreme Governor muſt, in any caſe, be contemplated with delight and admiration; but with devotion alſo and gratitude, when it is his wiſdom in that part of his adminiſtration under which we live, and in thoſe laws by which ourſelves are governed.

Firſt then, when our heavenly Father lends a gracious ear to the *petitions* of his children, He is not inattentive to their *behaviour*, or regardleſs of their merit. If you be a good man, your good works, you may be ſure, are all treaſured up in his remembrance, and will be brought forth, in due time, to your everlaſting triumph.

Secondly, You are not to lay aſide your *endeavours*, when you have recourſe to your prayers: you are to be as diligent and prudent, as if all depended on yourſelf; and as devout and earneſt, as if your own endeavours, without God's help, were inſignificant; as they are. *A man's heart deviſeth his way, but the Lord directeth his ſteps.*

Thirdly, Much leſs, when you pray, are you to throw away your piety and religion; which were a ſtrange contradiction: but rather you

are

are to be very religious and holy, that your petitions may be the more efficacious. The power of prayer is to be added to that of a *pious life:* it is the *fervent prayer of a righteous man that availeth much:* while, *the ſacrifice of the wicked is abomination; how much more, when he bringeth it with a wicked mind?*

Fourthly, Prayer, or it deſerves not the name, has in its compoſition ſome ingredients, *in the ſight of God,* and in the eye of reaſon alſo, *of great price:* particularly two.

The one is *Faith: The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him; yea, all ſuch as call upon him faithfully. Without Faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe him: for he that cometh to God, muſt believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him. Abraham believed God, and he counted it to him for righteouſneſs;* was pleaſed with it, as he is with every thing that is right, and good, and excellent, and that in proportion to it's goodneſs; or even eſteemed ſuch Faith in him as the fulfilling of all righteouſneſs: as it is, indeed, both intrinſically right, and the great principle from which all righteouſneſs ſprings.

Almighty God is not the object of our corporeal ſight: Yet it were abſurd to addreſs ourſelves to one, that has no Being, or is not preſent, or cannot help, or concerns not himſelf with our affairs, or is inflexibly reſolved to be our enemy. When we pray therefore, we ſuppoſe that there is nothing of all this; but, on the contrary, that he has a true and real Being, and

and is every where preſent through the whole world and univerſe; we perform this duty, *as ſeeing him who is inviſible*. When we pray, we believe that God hears the ſupplications of thoſe that call upon him; that his power is infinite; that the frame of nature is of his making, and ſtill in his hand; and that he hath reſpect unto his own work; is not only beneficent and liberal, but patient and of great pity, ready and deſirous to forgive thoſe that return, and reward thoſe that ſeek him. Now theſe thoughts and ſentiments with reſpect to the ſupreme Being, are both right in themſelves, and honourable to him; and, together with thoſe which more particularly belong to revealed religion, (reliance upon his promiſes, the acknowledgement of his overflowing infinite mercy in Chriſt Jeſus, and of his grace in the miſſion of his Spirit, and the expectation and ardent deſire of that ſpiritual everlaſting felicity brought to light by the Goſpel), they make up the ſubſtance of a juſt way of thinking upon the greateſt and moſt important ſubject in the world; and are the foundation of the moſt exalted affections, which knit the heart to God, and fill it with his love: and is it ſtrange, that prayer, which ſuppoſes theſe thoughts, flows from them, expreſſes, cheriſhes, and inflames them, ſhould be a duty well pleaſing to that gracious Being, who loves, and deſires to be beloved by us? or, that he ſhould appoint it as one of the means of obtaining his approbation, and all thoſe bleſſings, whatever they be, ſupernatural or common, of the world

to

to come, or of this preſent, pertaining *to life or godlineſs*, which he beſtows in the wiſdom of his providence, as the effects of his favour?

There is alſo *humility* in prayer: and this is another ſtrong recommendation of it to him, of whom it is ſo often written, that *he reſiſteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*

It may ſeem to require a very ſmall degree of the grace of humility, to acknowledge that God is ſtronger than man: but it is the humility and contrition of the *heart*, that gives force to prayer; and this either in *proſperity* or *diſtreſs*.

The hardeſt taſk is to be humble in proſperity: when every thing ſucceeds beyond your moſt ſanguine expectations, to aſcribe nothing to yourſelves, to your own conduct, ſagacity, merit; to look up to the ſupreme Diſpoſer of events with an eye of gratitude, expreſſive of the deepeſt ſenſe, both of his goodneſs, and your own unworthineſs.

To thee, Lord, be all the praiſe and glory for every thing we poſſeſs. Thou, in truth, art the only poſſeſſor of all: and we have ſeverally ſuch portions of what is thine intruſted to us, as thou in mercy and wiſdom ſeeſt meet. We are only what thou art pleaſed to make us, except ſo far as we are wicked: and to thee is owing every event that befals us, but the juſt puniſhment of our evil deeds, which we muſt impute to ourſelves. Us indeed thou ſpareſt; *thou haſt prepared a table before us, anointed our head with oil, and our cup is full:* yet remember

we

we our offences together with thy goodneſs; how little we have deſerved, while we receive ſo much. We deſire to be thankful, obedient, humble; to love thee, who haſt *firſt loved us*; and, as thou didſt love us in deed, and not in word, to live to thee, and for the good of others; whom we ſhould aſſiſt and comfort, as thou haſt made us able, and do to them as thou haſt done to us. The higher thy favour raiſes us, the more we bend; hearkening to the deſires and wiſhes of the loweſt of thoſe, who are thy children, Father, in common with ourſelves. *The proſperity of fools ſhall deſtroy them.* O let not our wealth produce intemperance, or avarice; our power, pride; our authority, inſolence; ſucceſs, ſecurity, and forgetfulneſs of God. 'Tis not without awful apprehenſions, that we reflect even upon thy goodneſs. The ſtream of divine bounty by which we live, let us not be overwhelmed by it; and undone by that *mercy* which is *with thee*, and for which thou art *to be feared.*

The ſentiments and ſupplications ſuitable to a ſtate of *diſtreſs* are expreſſed in few words by him, who was the greateſt example at the ſame time both of ſuffering and ſubmiſſion. He who *was in the beginning with God, and was God*, being become man, and about to be betrayed, forſaken, blaſphemed, and crucified, though he could have commanded all the Hoſts of Heaven, utters but theſe words, *Father, let this cup paſs from me; nevertheleſs, not as I will, but as thou wilt.*

SER-

SERMON V.

JOB xlii. 10.

The Lord turned the Captivity of Job, when he prayed for his Friends.

AMONG the ſeveral competitors for the Throne of a certain ancient Kingdom, in order to put an amicable end to the conteſt, and at the ſame time to refer the deciſion of it in ſome ſort to Heaven, it was agreed, that He ſhould be the ſucceſsful candidate, who ſhould firſt behold the rays of the riſing Sun.* So while the reſt were gazing with their eyes fixed on that part of the horizon where they expected the great Luminary of the Day, the God of Perſia, to aſcend; one of the number bore away the royal prize by turning his face towards the weſt. He diſcovered a ſtream of the Sun's beams by reflection from the ſummit of a mountain, or the pinnacle of a temple, before any part of his orb was yet viſible by a direct light.

This ſtory has the appearance of a little allegory, rather than of true hiſtory: and it is poſſible,

* — Eumque potiſſimum, quaſi acceptiſſimum diis, qui ſolem orientem primus vidiſſet. Juſtin.

ſible, the meaning may be this; that he who carried the crown in that competition, ſucceeded by not appearing too forward and eager in the purſuit. He modeſtly declined, he turned his face away from that great dignity; and for this very reaſon, it met him with the more willingneſs. The things which we deſire the moſt ardently, are not always to be demanded eagerly. Extreme ſelfiſhneſs is often the cauſe of its own diſappointment. The greedy go away unfed; while he that *ſcattereth, increaſeth*, and the liberal are loaded with good.

The Lord appeared unto Solomon; and God ſaid, Aſk what I ſhall give thee. And Solomon ſaid, Thy ſervant is in the midſt of thy people whom thou haſt choſen, a great people, that cannot be numbered, nor counted for multitude: give therefore thy ſervant an underſtanding heart. And God ſaid unto him, Becauſe thou haſt aſked this thing, and haſt not aſked for thyſelf long life, neither haſt aſked riches for thyſelf, nor haſt aſked the life of thine enemies, but underſtanding to diſcern judgement; Behold, I have done according to thy words; lo, I have given thee a wiſe and underſtanding heart: and I have alſo given thee that which thou haſt not aſked, both riches and honour.

How charming is the conteſt between Beneficence and Modeſty! the liberal hand, and the diſintereſted boſom! Even the receiver divides the glory with his divine Benefactor; and his generous concern for others, returns with accumulated benefits and bleſſings upon himſelf.

Attend

Attend to the example of Job. Under the preſſure of his great calamities and afflictions, he applied himſelf, and no wonder, to God by prayer; and being a good man, we may be allowed to ſuppoſe, that his petitions were not fruitleſs. But the petition which atchieved his recovery, or, however, that which he was offering up at the moment in which it pleaſed Almighty God to accompliſh it, was a petition for *other perſons*. It is written, *The Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends*.

How ſignal is this inſtance of God's diſpenſations! what luſtre doth it reflect upon that part of our applications to him, which we allot to the benefit of our brethren. You obſerve, that this eminent pattern of piety and of patience had been both frequent and earneſt in his ſupplications in his own favour; complaining, pleading, and, like another Jacob, *wreſtling* with God. *O that my grief were thoroughly weighed! it would be heavier than the ſand; and my words are ſwallowed up. O that I might have my requeſt, that God would grant me the thing that I long for! Why haſt thou ſet me as a mark againſt thee? I will ſpeak in the bitterneſs of my ſoul; Is it good unto thee, that thou ſhouldeſt oppreſs? that thou ſhouldeſt deſpiſe the work of thine hands? Remember, I beſeech thee, that thou haſt made me as clay; and wilt thou bring me into duſt again?*

Job, we ſee, was ſufficiently vehement in his own behalf: and yet, as if his expoſtulations were all in vain, *Though I ſpeak*, ſaith he, *my grief*

grief is not aſſwaged: and though I forbear, what am I eaſed? God hath delivered me up to the ungodly. He breaketh me with breach upon breach. My face is foul with weeping, and on my eye-lids is the ſhadow of death. I have ſaid to corruption, thou art my father; to the worm, thou art my mother and my ſiſter. God hath overthrown me: I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard; I cry aloud, but there is no judgement.

Not that this was ſtrictly true; or that his petitions even for himſelf were utterly without effect. God Almighty had mercy in ſtore; though he kept it back from him all the long time that he was making the moſt pathetic ſupplications for himſelf, and then beſtowed it when he began to pray for others: *The Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends.*

Nay, theſe very friends, as they are here ſtyled, hardly merited ſo favourable an appellation; accuſing him of crimes he had not committed; and upbraiding him with thoſe puniſhments of his ſins, which were, indeed, the trials of his virtue. And he was ſenſible of all the bitterneſs of their reproaches: *Ye overwhelm the fatherleſs: ye dig a pit for your friend. If your ſoul were in my ſoul's ſtead, I could heap up words againſt you, and ſhake mine head at you. But I would ſtrengthen you with my mouth; and the moving of my lips ſhould aſſwage your grief. He teareth me in his wrath, who hateth me: he gnaſheth upon me with his teeth: mine enemy ſharpeneth his eyes upon me.*

Yet

Yet was it required of Job to become the interceſſor for theſe very perſons, and to beg for them the forgiveneſs of thoſe offences, which had been committed againſt himſelf. And then, at laſt, after this illuſtrious teſtimony of his charity, added to thoſe of his patience and piety, when his virtues were thus brought to the height, and appeared in all their glory; then it pleaſed the wiſdom and mercy of God, breaking forth out of obſcurity, and made conſpicuous by his judgments, to reſtore, and double his proſperity.

Now this practice of making interceſſion to Almighty God in favour of others, muſt naturally be of uſe to the petitioner; if it be of any uſe to him to have his mind improved in virtue, in the moſt generous and noble diſpoſitions, and every ſentiment that belongs to the great principle of Charity. He cannot but increaſe his benevolence, while he gives this proof of it, and mixes it with his religion. When he is ſupplicating the throne of Grace in behalf of other men, for all manner of bleſſings for them, temporal, ſpiritual, and everlaſting; can he wiſh them evil? or ever after *do* it? *Doth the ſame fountain ſend forth ſweet water, and bitter?* Can rancour conſiſt with ſuch petitions, and dwell in a heart that is capable of theſe thoughts and deſires? Whatever be the event of his ſupplications with regard to thoſe, who are the ſubject of them; they cannot come back empty: his requeſts for them will

will at leaſt be ſucceſsful for himſelf, and *his prayer return into his own boſom.*

Indeed religion, and the exerciſe of any part of piety, has a natural tendency to quell thoſe tumults, and curb that ſelfiſhneſs of the mind, which are the ſources of injuſtice. The mere reflection, that we are God's creatures, as other men are, and depend upon him as they do, and muſt be judged by him along with them, and enter ſo ſoon upon a ſtate of never ending felicity or puniſhment; theſe reflections muſt always tend to cool our contentions about little matters, to reduce us to order, and, in ſhort, to make us *do to others, as we would they ſhould do to us*; which is a deſcription of the whole of our duty to them. But when to theſe general ſentiments of piety and equity, we add thoſe tender feelings, which will naturally ariſe within us while we make ourſelves interceſſors with our common Father for ſome particular perſon among our brethren, one, it may be, who has meant or done us wrong, who purſues us with injuries undeſerved, with calumnies unprovoked; we ſhall then learn the power of ſuch prayers better than by words; ſhall be no longer *ſtraitened*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *in our own bowels:* our hearts will be *enlarged*, to correſpond, according to our meaſure, with the divine charity; till we *apprehend that, for which alſo we are apprehended*; catch the ſame ſpirit, by which the Redeemer was moved to lay hold on us; and *know the love of Chriſt, which paſſeth knowledge.*

SERMON VI.

1 TIM. ii. 1.

I exhort, that first of all, Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and giving of Thanks be made for all Men.

THE social affections, which lead directly to the general good, are the sources of the highest satisfaction to the individual; and the devotions and prayers, which are offered up to God for others, are those which bring down the greatest graces and blessings on the petitioner. You do not wonder to find features of resemblance between Morality and Religion, two very nearly related, as well as inseparable, companions.

A wise man, therefore, would cultivate in his mind a regard to others, were it only out of respect to himself; and a pious Christian is frequent in the exercise of Intercession, for the amendment of his own heart, and the increase of his happiness, both naturally, and by the divine blessing. We are content to persuade men to mutual kindness, upon any principle; and bring them into a happy habit of generosity, whatever may be the motive to it. The harshness that is in the original seed, may wear out by cultivation, and the root of Selfishness yield the fruits of Love.

However,

However, both to do juſtice to the doctrines of Scripture, and give pleaſure to the generous mind, we may ſafely add, that there is yet another argument in recommendation of this duty of Interceſſion; and that is, the welfare and happineſs of thoſe perſons, who are the ſubject of your prayers. There is ground to hope, that *they* may reap benefit from this act of your charity, and be rewarded openly for the petitions which you put up for them in private.

Yes ſurely; and what occaſion for this caution? (as a plain man might be apt to argue;) for if my interceſſion can be of no uſe to them, why do I make it? For your own ſake, replies the philoſophical Chriſtian, and for the exerciſe and improvement of your charity.—Can my *charity* be employed, when all the benefit is to be confined to myſelf? Is it charity, to introduce into my prayers the *names* of other perſons, without any view to their advantage?—Why, yes; becauſe, ſpeaking of them as perſons to whom you wiſh well, you bring your mind to a better temper towards them; and learn to take pleaſure in their welfare, though you do nothing to promote it: you will, indeed, be the readier to promote it yourſelf, if ever it ſhould be in your power; but you expect no addition to be made to their happineſs, in conſequence merely of your deſire of it.

But if this then, might he not aſk, is to be my real aim and intention when I am taught to pray for other perſons, why is it that I do not plainly ſo expreſs it? Why is not the form of

the petition brought nearer to the meaning? Give them, ſay I to our heavenly Father, what is good: but this, I am to underſtand, will be as it will be, and is not for me to alter. What is it then that I am doing? I am deſiring to become charitable myſelf. And why may not I plainly ſay ſo? Is there ſhame in it, or impiety? The wiſh is laudable; why ſhould I form deſigns to hide it?

Or is it, perhaps, better to be brought about by indirect means, and in this artful manner? Alas! who is it that I would impoſe on? From whom can it be in this commerce that I deſire to hide any thing? When, as my Saviour commands me, I have *entered into my cloſet, and ſhut my door*; there are but two parties privy to my devotions, God, and my own heart; which of the two am I deceiving?

Cannot the ſerious ſacred purpoſes of religion be anſwered, and proper diſpoſitions wrought in us, without the garb of diſſimulation, even with our Maker? muſt we accuſtom ourſelves to apply to him in words, that convey not our real meaning?

Is there not too much refinement in theſe interpretations? a mixture of that *philoſophy*, which the Apoſtle Paul joins with *vain deceit*; by which Chriſtians are *ſpoiled after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world? I fear*, in another place ſays that great and truly learned Apoſtle, *leſt as the ſerpent beguiled Eve through his ſubtilty, ſo your minds ſhould be corrupted from the* ſimplicity *that is in Chriſt:* that amiable

amiable Character, which attends alike both upon *Truth* and *Virtue*; which is ſeen with ſo much approbation in a Chriſtian's *life*, and equally adorns the doctrines of his *Goſpel*.

I exhort, that firſt of all, ſupplications, prayers, interceſſions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority:—Why?—*that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godlineſs and honeſty:* Is it a peaceable *heart* only, and a loyal temper, think you, that we are to cultivate in ourſelves by ſuch ſupplications and prayers? Or do we put up theſe petitions to the heavenly King, in hopes that the Kings of the Earth at leaſt, may hear of them: and, by this artful management of our devotions, we may obtain from them what we ſeem to aſk of another hand? Or what other unnatural interpretation have you, in order that all may be performed according to the *courſe of nature?*

Or can you take up, at laſt, with this plain ſenſe; grounded, however, upon another text of Scripture? That ſince *the King's heart is in the hand of the Lord, and he turneth it whitherſoever he will*, we therefore pray that he will ſo turn it, that Chriſtians who lead their life in godlineſs and honeſty, may be allowed alſo to lead it in quietneſs and peace.

But can we ſuppoſe the ſupreme Being thus violently to invade his own works, and overrule the minds of his creatures whom he hath made *free?* where henceforth is their blame or merit? and where his juſtice?

Leave

Leave we this to him, who *knoweth whereof we are made*, and punisheth us always *less than our iniquities deserve*. He will not require *brick* without affording *straw*, nor call us to answer, but so far as he knows we are accountable.

The doctrine of *human liberty* is a subject attended with many other difficulties; and, indeed, is to a very great degree inexplicable: yet this is no disturbance to us; but in our commerce with each other, we proceed without scruple, and without danger, under the persuasion of it.

And as the belief of *Man's Freedom* is admitted in the conduct of human life; the doctrine of the *Divine Providence* is not less essential to religion. There may be difficulties here too; and no wonder, on such a subject; the nature and government of the infinite Being; his decrees established from eternity; his foreknowledge that cannot err; his will controuling all, and his justice punishing the wicked. Points like these, of which we must needs conceive very imperfectly, may be *explained*, till they become *contradictory*; and then raised up into gigantick objections. Which if we have dexterity enough to deal with, by the help of similar weapons, and the same learning of words, it is very well. But these difficulties, if they cannot be answered, must be overruled. It is neither so easy, nor so important, to be able to unravel such intricacies, as to *hold fast the form of sound words*. Almighty God is the original Author of our life and happiness; for which we

we are obliged to him. He was the true, the only proper Agent in the firſt formation of things; and is ſtill employed in the preſervation, and government of what he made. *He ſlumbereth not, nor ſleepeth. His eyes are over the righteous, and his ears open to their prayers.* And this not only when they pray for themſelves, but for other perſons: perſons abſent, and unacquainted with what is doing in their behalf; who yet, whether you can explain it by phyſical cauſes or no, receive real benefits and bleſſings from the merciful Providence of God, and through the prayers and piety of good men. Of this there are many inſtances upon record in Holy Scripture: the precepts of our Lord, and the duties of our religion ſuppoſe and imply it: it is contrary to no truth made known to us by experience, or reaſon: and we muſt hold it as an acquiſition too valuable to be given up to the clamour of Infidels, or the obſcure ſpeculations of the metaphyſical Believer.

SERMON VII.

JAMES v. 16.

Pray one for another.

INTERCESSION in favour of other perſons is, no doubt, highly advantageous to ourſelves;

ourſelves; as it tends naturally to increaſe in our minds, a charitable and pious diſpoſition; the greateſt of all graces and virtues, and the moſt efficacious means of bringing down the divine bleſſing on our head, both in this world, and that which is to come.

But though theſe are great benefits ariſing from ſo virtuous an exerciſe, and ſufficient, ſurely, to recommend it to all perſons, who deſire to be good and happy; yet they are neither the only effects to be expected from it, nor are they, indeed, the direct, proper, and natural end which we have in view, when we draw near the throne of the divine Grace, to diſcharge at once this office of Piety to our Creator, and Charity to our fellow-creatures.

When we pray to God for other men, the direct object of our deſires is, ſurely, their welfare and happineſs; as when we pray to him for ourſelves, we deſire our own. We beg him to bleſs our parents, wives, children, friends, and even our enemies; becauſe we truly deſire, that they may be bleſſed: and our prayers, we hope, are the way, or one way at leaſt, to obtain for them this ineſtimable treaſure, the favour and mercy of the Almighty.

But it may be ſaid, that Almighty God, being righteous and juſt, muſt deal with every perſon according to his deſert: when we intercede, therefore, for the good and virtuous, our prayers are ſuperfluous; and when we pray for the wicked, our application muſt be in vain.

But,

But, alas! what are our vaunted virtues, that call for rigid juſtice? We have deſerved very little beſides ſhame and puniſhment: and if our Judge ſhould be *extreme*, as the Scripture ſpeaks, *to mark what is done amiſs, who may abide it?* Is it for us to require ſuch exact meaſure; and ſhut out the overflowings of the divine mercy? Has the Lord of all things fewer rights, than any earthly maſter? who having been firſt juſt, has leave to be liberal; and after he hath left no ſervice without a fit recompence, may *do what he will with his own.*

But you think, perhaps, that it would be a more eminent exerciſe, if not of juſtice ſtrictly ſpeaking, yet of government; if the ſupreme and perfect Ruler would not make uſe of ſuch arbitrary rights, as weak men delight in; but according to the abſolute Rectitude of his nature, would be pleaſed to confine himſelf to the preciſe rule of right; making the felicity of every moral agent throughout the Univerſe moſt accurately proportionable to his improvement in the quality of virtue.

Behold even to the moon, and it ſhineth not; yea, the ſtars are not pure in his ſight: how much leſs man, that is a worm! yet can we ſit and dictate to that wiſdom, which reacheth from everlaſting to everlaſting; with ſcarce a meaning to the orders we iſſue out, and in the moſt profound ignorance of what is good, or may at all be poſſible!

Nothing is to be given to any moral agent, but for his merit! He is to be *made*, I ſuppoſe, without

without it. His creation, and the faculties proper for his nature, are capital gifts, and the foundation of all that are to follow; yet these you will allow to be conferred *for nothing*; or, at least, for nothing that he himself can have done to purchase them. This, we perceive, you consent to; because from the nature of the thing, in this case, your rule is not applicable.

But you require all moral agents to be created in the same *rank*; and endowed with equal powers and faculties at first, till they shall have raised themselves by their behaviour?

That may happen to be long. And in the mean time there may be left a vast void of Being, where superior faculties may even be wanted, might however be possessed, and well applied also, to the immense increase of the sum of universal felicity, and even virtue. So that while you are thus a friend to virtue in appearance, you put a stop to the most magnificent display of the divine powers, to the profusion of bliss, and wide extent and infinite multiplication of that very moral excellence, which you are so assiduous to advance.

But moral creatures of the same rank and class of Being, these at least, you are sure, ought to be treated all in the same manner, and distinguished only after they have deserved it?

All *men*, for example, should be endowed with equal capacities of body and mind, and have the same advantages of education, fortune, health, pious parents, and good examples? But we find men do differ in these things, and in many

many others, which muſt have great influence on their condition, even in the world to come, as far as we can judge, if we judge by their improvements in piety and virtue.

We make no ſcruple to thank Almighty God for the light of the Goſpel, and for the happineſs, we think, we have in being born in a Chriſtian country; and we perſuade ourſelves without any difficulty, that our lot is the more favourable on this account with reſpect to this world, and eſpecially that which is to come. Yet all other men have not this advantage. The greateſt part of men that have yet been born, died before the Goſpel was preached; and the greateſt part of thoſe who are now alive, it is probable, have hardly ever heard of it.

So that you ſee, how excellent ſoever your rule may ſeem to be, there muſt be ſome flaw in it: for Almighty God appears not to guide himſelf by it; and yet we make no doubt but he doth right, and acts both wiſely and equitably.

Would you carry the objection any further? Yes, it is juſt poſſible to add, allowances may be made for all theſe inequalities at the day of Judgment; ſo that finally, and upon the whole, nothing may prevail but virtue; and that be weighed and rewarded with the utmoſt impartiality and exactneſs.

And what do you infer from this? not ſurely, *That no one can receive either benefit or diſadvantage from any perſon beſides himſelf.* The poor

poor man, we hope, will be conſidered for his patience, when he appears before the great Tribunal: And is it therefore no charity to relieve him? Is there no harm done in the world by ill examples, becauſe the ſtrength of this temptation, and of every other, will one day be attended to? Can I do no man any good upon earth, becauſe he is hereafter to be judged with juſtice? What is it then we live for? or why have we in Scripture ſo many exhortations to good works, to alms-giving, to hoſpitality, to mercy; to feed the hungry, clothe the naked; to viſit the ſick and impriſoned, the fatherleſs and the widow in their affliction? How, indeed, ſhould I exerciſe or cultivate within my own breaſt the grace of *charity*, if I know that it can have no object? Or why ſo much as think even of *juſtice*, if no man can ever be the worſe for me?

Such a concluſion therefore as this, *That no one can receive good or harm from any perſon's actions but his own*, whatever maxim it be deduced from, muſt be wrong: it is either not true, or we are to think and act as if it were not.

Since Almighty God hath put our happineſs in the power of each other, to ſo great a degree as we ſee he hath; he may have done the ſame thing further, or in other inſtances. If he is pleaſed viſibly to make uſe of our good will and kindneſs, as his inſtrument in conferring on other perſons ſo many and ſuch important benefits; he may uſe our ſervice here too, if he ſees fit; and to our endeavours may require us to

to add alſo our prayers for their advantage. And our interceſſions with him may be as much the regular and neceſſary means of obtaining for them ſome bleſſings; as our labour or benefactions are the means, by which they become poſſeſſed of others.

The world is God's world; and the courſe of nature is what he makes it. Yet ſometimes a poor man is left to want bread, you *ſee*, except you give it him; and mercy, for aught you *know*, except you aſk it for him.

Upon the whole therefore it appears, firſt, That the *prayers* of pious perſons have an influence with that great Being to whom they are addreſſed, and an efficacy in obtaining what is deſired of him; though there may, no doubt, be reaſons of ſuch weight in ſome inſtances, as to obſtruct the ſucceſs of their petitions: and ſecondly, That the *interceſſions* of good men, their moſt retired and unknown applications to God in favour of other perſons, may be of real advantage, not only to thoſe who make them, but to thoſe alſo who are ſo happy as to be the ſubject of their interceſſion.

SER-

SERMON VIII.

PHILIP. iv. 6.

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by Prayer and Supplication, with Thankſgiving, let your Requeſts be made known unto God.

THE deſign of *general* prayers for God's bleſſing and protection is ſcarce conceivable, unleſs we ſuppoſe that the petition has ſome power and efficacy to obtain that which is deſired; but the deſign of *particular* requeſts, or ſuch as fix on a determinate object, is, without this ſuppoſition, utterly unintelligible.

God is my witneſs, whom I ſerve with my ſpirit in the Goſpel of his Son, that without ceaſing I make mention of you; always in my prayers making requeſt, (if by any means now at length I might have a proſperous journey by the will of God,) to come unto you: for I long to ſee you.—What earneſtneſs is here in the Apoſtle! agitated between fear and hope, and ſtruggling, as it were, with God, to try, if poſſibly, after ſo much delay, and many diſappointments, he might at length obtain what he had deſired ſo earneſtly!

Far be it from us to depreciate the duty of *reſignation* to the divine will; as it was very far from St. Paul's intention to ſuggeſt any thing in diſparagement of this ſublime virtue. Yet, ſurely,

ſurely, we may venture to affirm, that it would be an imperfect account of the deſign of theſe unceaſing ſupplications which were made by the Apoſtle, to ſay, *That he was expreſſing his confidence in God, and aſſured expectation, with a ſincere conſent on his part, that he would do what was beſt, and by the propereſt and moſt effectual means promote the greateſt good*;* as in other things, ſo particularly in all that might relate to this journey to Rome. For is it not plain, that he repreſents his prayers on this ſubject, and his conſtancy and perſeverance in them, as endeavours on his part, and means which he made uſe of for the accompliſhment of his deſires? *He made requeſt*, he tells the Romans, *if by any means, it might be the will of God that he might come unto them.*

There was given to me, ſaith the ſame Apoſtle in another place, *a thorn in the fleſh, the meſſenger of Satan to buffet me. For this thing I beſought the Lord thrice.* How? with what purpoſe? was it only that he might learn to *confide* in him? or *give his conſent* to ſuffer? Take his own words: *For this thing I beſought the Lord thrice*, THAT IT MIGHT DEPART FROM ME.

It is not aſſerted, that ſuch prayers are always granted: but you ſee in what terms, and with what view they are made; and that by the beſt of men, whoſe examples are recorded in Scripture.

Well

* *Abernethy* on the Divine Attributes, Vol. II. S. 11. p. 409. Printed at London, 1746.

Well then, it may be ſaid, (for Philoſophy is apt to be diſputatious,) if you are not content with expreſſing your *conſent* and *confidence* that God will do what is *beſt*; you deſire him, perhaps, to do otherwiſe; you aſk him to do what is *not beſt*: and whether, anſwer me, do you hope, or do you wiſh to prevail with him?

I anſwer, that God will do what is beſt, whether we conſent or no, and whether we pray or no; and though we ſhould reſiſt, or blaſpheme him: that is, he will do what will be *then* beſt; what will be fitteſt for him to do, in that caſe; upon ſuppoſition that we do nothing, or nothing but what is wrong. But without our pious endeavours, and earneſt prayers too, that beſt which he will do, will not be the beſt for us, we are ſure; nor ſo good, perhaps, as it might be even for other perſons.

Is not the deſign of prayer, we are told, *to perſuade the ſupreme Being to alter his meaſures* *: and, *we may be aſſured, that by the propereſt and moſt effectual means he will promote the greateſt good* †.

Bleſſed be his name; it is his care. The Univerſe is too large an object, for us to have in view in our conduct. It is for us, to diſcharge the duties of our ſtation, and all will be well.

And

* *Aber.* pag. 412. † *Aber.* p. 409.

And if we will not diſcharge our duty, all will ſtill be well. The infinite Wiſdom may bring good out of evil. Our vice, and miſery, and that of others whom we have ruined, may be all made to contribute in his hands to this great end of *good*. Yet, ſurely, it is in our power, it is our duty, it is his will, that we ſhould *not* contribute to the general good in this manner; but in another; by our virtue, and piety, and devotion; by doing what good we are able, and looking up to him for protection, and calling out to him for aſſiſtance. And we may hope, that ſuch a conduct as this, under the government of his providence, will contribute alſo, and as much at leaſt, as our vices or puniſhment would have done, to the end you ſpeak of, the greateſt general good. And at the ſame time we have the comfort to know, that our virtue and piety will do good to ourſelves; and, we truſt, to others; as it is written, *Thy wickedneſs may hurt a man as thou art, and thy righteouſneſs may profit the ſon of man.*

Hezekiah was ſick unto death. And the prophet Iſaiah came to him, and ſaid, Thus ſaith the Lord, Set thine houſe in order; for thou ſhalt die, and not live. Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed.——And it came to paſs, after Iſaiah was gone out into the middle court, that the word of the Lord came to him, ſaying, Turn again and tell Hezekiah, Thus ſaith the Lord, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have ſeen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee.

On the third day thou ſhalt go up unto the houſe of the Lord. And I will add unto thy days fifteen years.

Did Hezekiah's prayer *perſuade the ſupreme Being to alter his meaſures?*

Beſides the addition to his own term of life, his ſupplications ſeem to have procured alſo favour for his people. *I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee, and this city out of the hand of the King of Aſſyria.*

It is added, *And I will defend this city, for mine own ſake, and for my ſervant David's ſake.* The piety even of King David alſo comes in, you ſee, as ſome reaſon ſtill, ſo long, long after his death, for mercy to the Jews, and the protection of Jeruſalem.

Where then are all our calculations of human merit, and God's goodneſs? proportions between our ſcanty virtue, and the *fulneſs of Him that is able*, and willing too, *to do exceeding abundantly, above all that we*, not only deſerve, but *aſk, or think?* What is the meaſure of his bounty, whoſe *mercy reacheth unto the heavens*, and his *ſalvation from generation to generation.*

Is it not enough, that we know ſo much of his thoughts and providence, that he is *ſlow to anger, and of great kindneſs?* condemns unwillingly, forgives with *joy*; *puniſheth us leſs than our iniquities deſerve*, and for a little ſervice, or a *light affliction, that is but for a moment*, repays us with *a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory?*

When

When we are ſure, he will do us no wrong; let us allow him to be as liberal as he pleaſes, and to whom he ſees fit: not imitating the rebellious, and afterwards repining, Prophet; who would readily have been the meſſenger of God's wrath, but for the fear of becoming the miniſter of his mercy. Becauſe *ſixſcore thouſand perſons* that were innocent, and many more, probably, that were penitent, periſhed not; *it diſpleaſeth Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry*; complaining to his Maker, even of his goodneſs, and reproaching him with his diſpoſition to forgive: *O Lord, was not this my ſaying? I knew, that thou art a gracious God and merciful. Therefore, now, O Lord, take, I beſeech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die, than to live.*

Happy, happy is it for us, that our Judge and Lord is not man; mean, and petulant, revengeful, inexorable, and cruel: bearing in mind the offences, perhaps the ſlips and follies of his creatures for ever, and treaſuring up all their infirmities againſt the day of vengeance.

Yet the noble, or the tender hearted, even among men, relax and ſoften at the miſeries, at the ſupplications of thoſe, who are brought down and humbled before them: and if they muſt not pardon, puniſh with a tear.

How much more is the Lord *nigh unto all them that call upon him, that call upon him faithfully! He will fulfil the deſire of them that fear*

him; he will hear their cry, and will help them.

Thou ſhalt call, and the Lord ſhall anſwer; thou ſhalt cry, and he ſhall ſay, here I am. Nay, *it ſhall come to paſs,* ſaith the Lord, *that before they call, I will anſwer; and whiles they are yet ſpeaking, I will hear.*

My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, ſaith the Lord: for as the heavens are higher than the earth, ſo are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

All the regard that is on earth from one man towards another, the fidelity of a friend, the pity of a father, the fond ſolicitude of the moſt tender mother for her offſpring, do but faintly repreſent the love of God to Men. And is it a wonder, that their very deſires and wiſhes are before him, their wants weighed in his balance, their tears numbered in his book?

Zion ſaid, the Lord hath forſaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her ſucking child, that ſhe ſhould not have compaſſion on the ſon of her womb? yea, they may forget: yet will I not forget thee.

Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holineſs, and of thy glory: where is thy zeal, and thy ſtrength, the ſounding of thy bowels, and of thy mercies towards me? are they reſtrained? Doubtleſs, thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Iſrael acknowledge

knowledge us not: Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer.

You ſee, both what profeſſions Almighty God condeſcends to make of his good will to men; and with what zealous importunity pious perſons at all times have called upon him in prayer, by a multitude of titles laying claim to his attention. And were they only endeavouring to work upon their own temper and affections? Did they hope for nothing directly from him, of whom they aſked ſo much? Or were their hopes vain and groundleſs? and theſe holy perſons ignorant of the true nature and *deſign of prayer?* Is there no real foundation in Religion for the expectations they ſeem to have entertained? and were theſe Prophets and Saints, with reſpect to the efficacy of their petitions, in no better condition than the idolatrous worſhippers of the god Baal? *They cried aloud, and cut themſelves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood guſhed out upon them: but there was neither voice, nor any to anſwer, nor any that regarded.*

Be as good and virtuous as you pleaſe, as you can: the more good you do, the more you ſhall receive. Nothing will be loſt: not the ſmalleſt particle of your Piety and Virtue ſhall fall to the ground and periſh; but all be ſafely laid up for you in the *book of God's remembrance.*

But being ſure to receive, yourſelves, an ample and abundant recompence for every poſſible degree of your own goodneſs; ſuffer the

the overflowings of his bounty to reach even to the leſs deſerving; to thoſe perhaps whoſe calamities alone recommend them to his pity, or for whom nothing can be alledged, that you know of, but that they deſire to be forgiven. Call him not too ſtrictly to account for his condeſcenſions: give him leave to be liberal, even without rule: and let *the dogs be fed with the crumbs, that fall from their maſter's table.*

Or, if he muſt apologize for this redundancy of his mercy, he hath already done it. *Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine:* while I forgive thy brother's faults, can I forget thy obedience? being witneſs of my goodneſs, rely at leaſt upon my juſtice: add to thy many virtues, this higheſt grace of kindneſs to the undeſerving, and divine joy at their amendment. *It is meet, that we ſhould make merry and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was loſt, and is found.*

SERMON IX.

ISAIAH liii. 12.

He bare the ſin of many, and made interceſſion for the tranſgreſſors.

IN the charitable and holy exerciſe of Interceſſion, Chriſtians may mutually confer and receive the ſame kindneſs; and by means of this happy interchange of pious offices, each perſon reap the benefit of the devotions of all.

The efficacy alſo of our devout applications to the common Father of us all is increaſed by their union: ſo that we may ſafely adopt the Preacher's maxim, 'If one prevail againſt 'him, two ſhall withſtand him; and a three-'fold cord is not quickly broken.'

Nay, our Lord goes ſo far, as to aſcribe to this union of our requeſts an efficacy irreſiſtible: 'I ſay unto you, that if two of you ſhall 'agree on earth, as touching any thing that 'they ſhall aſk; it ſhall be done for them of 'my Father which is in Heaven.'

There is ſomething in Interceſſion ſo peculiarly pleaſing to Almighty God, and prevalent with him; that a good man will obtain more, it almoſt ſeems, for another, than he is able to do by the moſt importunate application for himſelf.

The

The Angels, that were ſent to deſtroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, brought forth Lot, and ſaid, 'Eſcape for thy life; look not behind 'thee, neither ſtay thou in all the plain; eſcape 'to the mountain, leſt thou be conſumed. 'And Lot ſaid unto them, Oh not ſo, my 'Lord; behold now, thy ſervant hath found 'grace in thy ſight, and thou haſt magnified thy 'mercy, which thou haſt ſhewed unto me in 'ſaving my life; and I cannot eſcape to the 'mountain, leſt ſome evil take me, and I die: 'Behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and 'it is a little one; Oh let me eſcape thither, (is 'it not a little one?) and my ſoul ſhall live. 'And he ſaid unto him, See, I have accepted 'thee concerning this thing, that I will not 'overthrow this city, for the which thou haſt 'ſpoken.'

What an inſtance is this of the power of prayer! a city, and ſuch a city, ſaved from deſtruction, ſnatched, as it were, from under the impending ſtroke, by no amendment or repentance of the inhabitants, but by the violence of prayer, and againſt the will, if we might dare to ſay it, of the Divine Avenger. 'Haſte thee, 'ſays he, eſcape thither; for I cannot do any 'thing, till thou be come thither.' The hands, you ſee, of the Hoſt of Heaven are bound down by the predominant authority of a good man's petitions: 'I cannot do any thing, till 'thou be come thither.'

And yet, this very Lot himſelf; (and wonder not; or rather, wonder indeed, as you muſt, when

when you contemplate thoſe *judgments* which are *unſearchable*; but let not your aſtoniſhment extinguiſh your religion, but inflame and ſtrengthen it: This very Lot himſelf,) ſo *juſt*, ſo *righteous*, ſo powerful with God, was yet indebted for his own life to the interceſſions of another perſon. For thus it is written, 'It 'came to paſs, when God deſtroyed the cities 'of the plain, that God remembered *Abraham*, 'and ſent Lot out of the midſt of the over-'throw, when he overthrew the cities in the 'which Lot dwelt.'

But the power of prayer and interceſſion appears with ſtill more dignity in the example of Moſes; who ſo often ſtepped in between the people of Iſrael, and their incenſed Lord, and averted the puniſhment prepared for their moſt incorrigible obſtinacy. The ſupreme Being ſometimes, like one whoſe power was ſubject to the controul of another, begs, and, I had almoſt ſaid, bribes this holy man not to interpoſe his irreſiſtible interceſſion, but permit him to take vengeance: 'Let me alone, that my wrath 'may wax hot againſt them, and that I may 'conſume them; and I will make of thee a 'great nation.'

And at another time, when this Divine wrath had broken forth, 'Moſes ſaid, take a cenſer, 'and put fire therein from off the altar:——— 'And Aaron took, as Moſes commanded, and 'ran into the midſt of the congregation; and 'behold, the plague was begun among the 'people; and he put on incenſe, and made an 'atonement

'atonement for the people: And he ſtood be-
'tween the dead and the living, and the plague
'was ſtayed.' No ſtudied pomp of deſcription ever reached the majeſty and terror compriſed in theſe few plain words; 'He ſtood between 'the dead and the living; and the plague was 'ſtayed.'

There is but one Interceſſor, that can be named after the illuſtrious example of Moſes; and that is He, of whom Moſes was the ſervant and the type; that great High Prieſt and Sacrifice, who is 'the mediator of a better covenant; '*and who, not* by the blood of goats and calves, 'but by his own blood entered in once into the 'holy place, having obtained eternal redemp-'tion for us. Once, in the end of the world 'hath he appeared to put away ſin by the ſa-'crifice of himſelf; *yet* he ever liveth to make 'interceſſion.'

Every one of the arguments in ſupport of every other interceſſion is applicable here with a force infinitely greater. So much our own little reaſon may teach us, that his prayer muſt be the moſt prevalent who is moſt exalted in dignity and goodneſs, and deareſt to the Father of all mercies.

But this interceſſion is tranſcendently ſuperior to all others, not only in *degree*, but in *kind*; (as it muſt needs appear even to our apprehenſion) being connected with the atonement made by this Interceſſor in his own blood: now, we know, *there is* but *one* ſuch 'media-'tor between God and man, the man Chriſt 'Jeſus.'

The

The redemption of mankind by the incarnation and death of the Son of God, the ſufferings and the glory of Chriſt, are things which the angels deſire to look into; a myſtery, which men muſt devoutly contemplate, though they cannot comprehend.

Here, here then muſt you look, if you would behold the efficacy of interceſſion in it's full light and glory. Here is an interceſſion, by the virtue of which all other interceſſions, all prayers, and all good works are accepted, and ſins forgiven.

Look up to the croſs; and there you may behold One interpoſing between a world of ſinners and the ſentence of everlaſting condemnation.

But 'wherefore art thou red in thine appa-'rel? and thy garments like him that treadeth 'in the wine-fat? I have troden the wine-preſs 'alone;—— the wine-preſs of the fierceneſs 'and wrath of Almighty God.'

See, on him falls all the puniſhment of the innumerable offences of all. 'All we, like 'ſheep, have gone aſtray; and the Lord hath 'laid on him the iniquity of us all.' He ſuffers, when we have ſinned; and dies, that we may live.

Bring hither your objections to the divine government, your mighty demonſtrations concerning man's merit, and the utter inſignificance of every other conſideration or offering. Weary of diſputing, come, lay all your difficulties upon this altar; and they will be conſumed at once in the flame of Love.

Conſider,

Conſider, not only the meaſure, or rather the *length and breadth* immeaſurable, of the Redeemer's love to men; but alſo the freedom and generoſity of his affection. It was 'while we 'were yet ſinners, that Chriſt died for us.' We had not deſerved ſo much kindneſs, nor any; but on the contrary, were *enemies* to him by our evil deeds, when he undertook and accompliſhed, at the expence of his own blood, this aſtoniſhing redemption.

Nay, even more:—and yet what more can be done, or can be imagined than this, to ſuffer, and to die for the love of thoſe that hate us?—He, the Redeemer of men, was not by his nature liable to this ſuffering and ſorrow. He was in 'glory with the Father, before the 'world was; *he* was with God, and was God:' but he became man: he aſſumed our nature, that he might be capable of it's calamities; and took on him a body, on purpoſe to be crucified. He breaks through the limits and natural diſtinction of Beings, and is driven to the neceſſity of this moſt aſtoniſhing of all miracles, that it might be poſſible to ſuffer pain, and want, and ignominy; to be afflicted and ſcorned; to undergo all the calamities incident to the moſt unfortunate of our ſpecies, all the exquiſite torments which the moſt criminal can incur: and from men; from men, inſenſible and blind. But he pities, and ſtill loves you. Your injuſtice and cruelty make no alteration in his heart: though his ſtrength may fail with his wounds, his affection is ſtill vigorous: as he hangs

hangs bleeding on the croſs, in agonies beyond utterance, which ſeparate his ſoul from the body, and will deliver him ſoon from all you can do; hearken! his breath expires in interceſſions for you; 'Father, forgive them, for 'they know not what they do.'

And will you do nothing now in return, or in acknowledgement at leaſt of ſo much kindneſs?—Yes; what is proper for us to do?—'Live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this 'preſent world;' it is the very leſſon, which, the Apoſtle tells us, 'the grace of God which 'bringeth ſalvation teacheth:' diſcharge your duty to God, your neighbour, and yourſelves; and in general keep God's commandments.—This, indeed, is doing a great deal; and may imply many things, that will be laborious and difficult to us.—And ſhould you not be willing to ſubmit to labour and difficulties; when at the ſame time that you expreſs your gratitude to the Redeemer, you are concurring with him in his deſigns for your everlaſting ſalvation?

But come; ſince you are ſo much afraid of hardſhips in religion, there is a way, known indeed to few, one ſecret way of avoiding them.

How? and yet be ſaved?

Or elſe, I am ſure, the ſecret will be worth little. But you are too well inſtructed in ſound principles of piety, to think there can be any ſafe way of obtaining a ſhare in that happineſs which the Redeemer has purchaſed, without ſubmitting to the burden of obeying his commandments.

mandments. However, you are desirous to hear it: in a word, it is Love. *Love* him; and then your obedience will be no *burden* to you. The commands of Christ must be obeyed: but you may be eased of what is troublesome and difficult in this obedience, if you can get your heart touched with this divine affection.

Observe what a wonderful effect this sentiment of love is capable of producing in those persons, whose hearts are tender, and susceptible of deep impressions: how great an alteration it makes, not only in the course of their conduct, but in their very sensations and judgment. They think nothing too much, which they can do, or undergo, for the sake of the beloved person. They give up their own inclination and interest, even with pleasure. The hardest things become easy, the most irksome offices delightful, near the object of their affection. They are not tired of their assiduities, or greedy of any recompense for them: happy, so long as they are able to please; and amply rewarded in the very performance, and the kind acceptance of their services.

How unlike are those who serve for hire! No matter how little they do, provided you will but be content with it. There is in their motions a sluggishness, a reluctance, that perpetually demands the spur. In brief, they are not serving you, but themselves: neither side is pleased: your business is but ill discharged; and their employment is one continual struggle against difficulties.

Many

Many excellent things have been ſpoken, and very juſtly, of many excellent graces and virtues: but there is none of them to be compared with that, which is here recommended to you. It is 'the firſt and great command-'ment:' it is that, on which 'hang all the 'law and the prophets;' and that, finally, on which above all things your own *happineſs* depends.

'There be nine things, which I have judged 'in mine heart to be happy; and the tenth I 'will utter with my tongue. A man that hath 'joy of his children, and he that liveth to ſee 'the fall of his enemy; that dwelleth with a 'wife of underſtanding, and that hath not 'ſlipped with his tongue; that hath not ſerved 'a man more unworthy than himſelf; that 'hath found prudence; that ſpeaketh in the 'ears of him that will hear: how great is he 'that findeth wiſdom? and none *(of theſe)* is 'above him that feareth the Lord: but the 'LOVE of the Lord paſſeth all things; he that 'holdeth it, to whom ſhall he be likened?'

To none indeed on earth: but he may be likened to thoſe happy Spirits above, that encompaſs the throne of God; who ſeeing him as he is, are filled with his love, and with the light of his countenance. And he ſhall be joined in due time to their ſociety; and with them worſhip, ſerve, and poſſeſs, the ſupreme Object of his affections; the ſource and author of every thing that is fair, and good, and lovely; and the boundleſs ocean, to which it all returns, and

and in which it will be ſwallowed up, and yet not loſt, for ever.

SERMON X.

MATT. vi. 9,10,11,12,13.

After this Manner therefore Pray ye: our Father, which art in Heaven; hallowed be thy Name; thy Kingdom come; thy will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven: Give us this Day our daily Bread; and forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors; and lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from evil: for thine is the Kingdom, and the Power and the Glory, for ever. Amen.

OF all the applications to the ſupreme Being which are extant, and are of a general nature, not receiving an additional force from the uncommon or moving circumſtances of thoſe who made them; this now before us, the Prayer of our Lord, is undoubtedly the beſt, being at the ſame time the moſt rational, and the moſt devout. It would have been ſo eſteemed by all judges, if the name of it's author had been never known to us: ſo that whether we have an eye to the preaching, or the prayer of our Redeemer,

deemer, the obſervation, is equally juſt, 'That 'never man ſpake like this man.'

Our Lord's prayer, as it is uſually obſerved, conſiſts of ſix petitions: yet of theſe ſix, the three firſt can hardly be called by that name; being more properly acts or expreſſions of Adoration, Obedience, Submiſſion; by which we render honour to the Divine Being, and give up ourſelves, along with the whole creation, to his government and diſpoſal; before we preſume to offer any requeſts in our own favour, even for the ſupply of our moſt neceſſary wants, or the forgiveneſs of our ſins.

There is a propriety in this. The inhabitants of Heaven, when *they* worſhip him that liveth for ever and ever, caſt their crowns before his throne, ſaying; 'Thou art worthy, O 'Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and pow-'er; for thou haſt created all things, and for 'thy pleaſure they are, and were created: they 'reſt not day and night, ſaying, holy, holy, 'holy, Lord God Almighty.' And although in this preſent ſtate of infirmity and want, it is very allowable for *us*, and our duty to let our 'requeſts be made known unto God,' and to join our ſupplications to our thankſgivings; yet let us take care that they be ſo joined. It will be unbecoming, and argue a very wrong diſpoſition of mind in us, if we never draw near to the throne of grace, but in our diſtreſs; and having received ſo many benefits, remember nothing in the Divine Preſence, but our neceſſities alone.

God is the *Father* of the Univerſe: all nature owes it's being and ſupport to Him. He bears a nearer degree of the ſame relation to all ſpiritual Beings, endowed with intelligence, and capable of virtue; who have received a greater portion of his kindneſs and care; and ſhew, or may do, a ſtronger reſemblance of their Divine Parent. Of man in particular it is ſaid, that he was created 'in the image of God,' and he is ſtyled his *ſon*. A good man may with ſtill better hopes make uſe of this endearing appellation; and a good Chriſtian above all. He is 'born 'again, from above,' by the operation of the ſame Divine Spirit, by which the Eternal Word was incarnate, and became the Redeemer of men: and he is made 'an heir of God, and 'joint heir with Chriſt.' By whom he is taught and authorized, as he is prompted by that Spirit, to lay claim to the relation, and in his applications to the Maker of all things, to ſay:

ABBA, *Father*; Thou author, preſerver, ſupport, of my being, life, hopes, and happineſs; who haſt brought me into this world, thy work; and redeemed me by thy only begotten Son, through thy Holy Spirit, to an eternal inheritance in Heaven; I acknowledge thy authority, and thy affection, with reverence and gratitude: I own thy paternal power and tenderneſs, and approach thy preſence with the ſentiments of a ſon; with fear, and love, and joy. Thus emboldened, I raiſe my thoughts from earth to heaven; I look up to that celeſtial ſeat, where

where thou haſt dwelt from eternity, enthroned in majeſty above all height, and clothed with light which no eye can bear to behold. But though thy glory is unſearchable, and I cannot ſee thee as thou art; yet ſo much, at leaſt, I can diſcern of thee by thy image, expreſſed in thy word, and reflected from thy works; that thou art great, and juſt, and holy. Thou wilt be 'ſanctified in them that come nigh thee.' Thou requireſt truth in the hearts of thy worſhippers; and that the lips which preſume to utter thy hallowed name, be free both from impurity and fraud. May the number be multiplied without meaſure, of ſuch as preſent this 'incenſe to thy 'name, and a pure offering:' and Oh! that my voice alſo might be heard among thoſe, who thus adore thee! But alas! we have been enemies to our God; rebels to thy rightful ſway: we have followed the dictates of pride and paſſion; have been ſeduced by the Tempter, led aſtray by our own corrupt mind, or by the wiles of others; and thy world hath laid under the power of the *evil one:* how long, O Lord, Holy and True? The time will ſurely come, (let it come ſpeedily!) when thy juſt dominion ſhall be univerſally acknowledged, in every region, by every heart; when Thou ſhalt reign unrivalled in all thy works; and the uſurped authority of that Apoſtate Spirit, which divides and deforms thy kingdom, be utterly deſtroyed for ever. In Heaven, thy will is the inviolable law: Myriads of miniſters encircle thy throne, who ceaſe not day and night to celebrate and to

ſerve Thee, with uninterrupted praiſes, and unerring obedience. Oh! that ſuch fidelity were found on earth! that the ſons of men did even now reſemble that celeſtial ſociety, to which they hope hereafter to be united! were animated with the like holy ardent zeal, and could give themſelves to God with the ſame entire devotion! We are blind and vain, but Thou art wiſe and good. Wiſe therefore in thy wiſdom, ſecure under thy care, great and happy in humility and ſubjection, we have no wiſhes but in Thee. Our whole deſire and glory is to be, to do, to ſuffer whatever Thou art pleaſed to appoint. During our paſſage through this periſhable ſtate, we truſt, and know, that Thou who gaveſt us life, wilt give us alſo all ſuch things as are neceſſary for it's ſupport: and we aſk no more. But Oh! leave us not deſtitute of that 'bread which cometh down from heaven.' Let our ſouls be nouriſhed by thy word and ordinances; that we may grow in grace, and be made partakers of a life which will never end. Wealth, fame, and power, be they freely theirs, to whoſe lot they fall: let our riches be repoſited in Heaven: the object of our ambition is the light of thy countenance, even the approbation and applauſe of God.——What have I ſaid? Ah me! can I hope to be juſtified, when I am judged? dare I truſt to that fiery trial? will my life, or will my heart endure the inſpection of thy pure eye? But there is mercy with Thee. Let me appeal from the ſeverity of thy Juſtice, and lay hold on this anchor of my hopes.

hopes. Pity, where Thou canſt not approve; and pardon that, which muſt offend. Then ſhall my life bear teſtimony to my thankful heart; and that gratitude, which extends not to Thee, ſhall overflow on men. How juſt is it, that I ſhould ſhew to them that mercy, which I aſk, and want! I bleſs thee for thy goodneſs, and I feel the *conſtraint* of Love; and do now from the bottom of my heart, naked before that Preſence, from which no thought is hid, moſt freely forgive all thoſe, who by word or deed, knowingly or ignorantly, have offended or have injured me. I relinquiſh all my claims to vengeance. I bury from this moment, for ever in oblivion, all offences, and the very remembrance of reſentment: And do moſt ardently deſire, that the ſenſe of thy divine and boundleſs love may kindle in my breaſt a flame of thankfulneſs to Thee, which no time can quench; and an affection to men, which no provocation, no wrongs can conquer. May this principle of love live in my heart, and direct and animate my actions! I am willing it ſhould be called forth and cultivated by exerciſe and diſcipline: and whatever trials or ſufferings thy wiſdom ſees fit for this happy end, I cheerfully embrace them. Shew me no hurtful indulgence. I decline no danger for thy glory, for the good of men, for the improvement of my virtue.—Yet remember that I am but duſt. Be Thou near me in thoſe perilous moments. Let not the ſtorms of trouble and trial overwhelm me. Strengthen my failing faith.

faith. When I ſink, ſtretch forth thy hand. I rely on thy Providence and Grace; that Thou wilt deliver me from the danger, or ſupport me under it. Save me from ſin, from the great enemy of ſouls, and from eternal miſery.

Theſe, Lord, are the requeſts, which my heart pours out unto Thee. But Thou ſeeſt the wants, which it doth not know; Thou heareſt the deſires, it cannot utter. Give us what is good, though we aſk it not: and mercifully deny, when we pray for evil.

My ſoul falls down with the loweſt reverence before thy throne, adding it's little homage to the profound adorations and triumphant Halleluiahs of the whole hoſt of Heaven, and all thy Saints on earth: Power and Honour be to Thee, Dominion and Glory, infinite and everlaſting, my Lord, my Father, and my God.

SERMONS

ON THE

ARTICLES

OF THE

CHRISTIAN FAITH.

SERMON I.

HEBR. ii. 6.

He that cometh to God muſt believe that he is.—

RELIGION conſiſts in a proper diſpoſition of mind, and due demeanour towards the Supreme Being. It implies therefore the belief of his exiſtence; and will be liable to many irregularities and much danger, if that belief be not well fixed, and ſupported by ſolid arguments. Men may indeed be perſuaded on ſlender grounds; and ſuch perſuaſions may be ſufficient ſometimes to produce ſuitable diſpoſitions and actions: but perſuaſions, not rooted in truth, are more liable either to be torn up by the blaſt of a violent temptation, or conſumed by the tooth of time.

But it is our own fault, if our faith be expoſed to this danger. 'God hath not left him-'ſelf without witneſs:' and the grounds on which we believe his Being, as they are moſt unqueſtionable, ſo they are eaſy to be known. Great reaſon, no doubt, there is, to acknowledge our ignorance, and the wiſeſt perſons have always been the moſt ſenſible of it; yet, amidſt all that cloud of darkneſs with which the human mind is overſpread, we may ſtill 'feel 'after, and find,' the firſt cauſe of our own and of

of all exiſtence, who 'is not far from every 'one of us; for in him we live and move and 'have our being.'

Obſerve firſt the *univerſality* of this belief, with regard both to time and place; no nation having been known ſo barbarous, nor age ſo ignorant, nor period ſo remote, in which traces of this perſuaſion are not diſcernible.

The notions muſt be *natural*, in which all concur. Or if we are wrong in aſcribing the formation and government of all things to a divine power; it is an honour even to err, in company with the wiſe and virtuous of every nation and age.

But *prudence* as well as modeſty ſhould teach us deference to ſuch authority, and diſtruſt of our own opinions, when we find them ſo ſuſpiciouſly peculiar. A wiſe perſon chooſes to follow the *multitude*, when it is not *to do evil*; and will ſtay till he has demonſtration on his ſide, before he ſtands ſingle in ſuch a cauſe againſt the whole world.

But the *demonſtration*, as profound inquirers have pronounced, is on the ſame ſide with authority. And even if we ſhould not be able to diſcern the force of their concluſions; yet, beſides the former argument from univerſal conſent, the very *teſtimony* of theſe perſons is ſomething: nay, it is conſiderable; except we can go ſo far beyond them in theſe reſearches, as to detect the fallacies that have miſled them. For if we only do not comprehend the inference; there ſtill remains ground to think, that they

they may discern it, who say they do; and who have given us on other occasions good reason to acknowledge their abilities and sincerity.

The ideas of *Space* and *Time*, force themselves upon us, whether we will or no; so that we cannot, even in imagination, suppose them either not to be, or to be limited. We know intuitively that they exist, and are without bounds. Infinity and Eternity cannot otherwise be, than by being the Properties of something Eternal and Infinite: therefore there is such a Being.

If you see the force of this argument, your faith is, so far, changed into *knowledge*. If not, there is no need you should pretend to do it. 'Will you talk deceitfully for God? 'Will you accept his person?' Attend to other proofs, level to every capacity.

The being of the Creator is seen in his *works*, and these either *miraculous*, or *common*. The order of nature, and every interruption of that order, speak the same language, and 'declare 'the glory of God.' Nor is there any thing in this way of reasoning either deceitful or obscure.

A Prophet tells you, suppose, as the Psalmist doth, that 'it is the Lord who made the 'heavens; glory and worship are before him, 'power and honour are in his sanctuary.' You answer, with the scoffers mentioned by the Apostle, 'All things continue as they were 'from the beginning.' Could he speak with the

the ſame effect, as did the leader of the Jews, 'Sun, ſtand thou ſtill upon Gibeon; and thou 'moon, in the valley of Aijalon; when the 'ſun ſtood ſtill in the midſt of heaven, and 'haſted not to go down about a whole day;' would he take for granted the exiſtence of a ſuperior power, or prove it?

In what way did Elijah reaſon, when he 'put the wood in order, and cut the Bullock 'in pieces, and ſaid, fill four barrels with wa-'ter, and pour it on the burnt ſacrifice, and on 'the wood?' The people who were preſent when 'the fire of the Lord fell, and conſum-'ed the burnt ſacrifice, and the wood, and the 'ſtones, and the duſt, and licked up the water 'that was in the trench,' they found no defect in his argument; 'they fell on their fa-'ces and ſaid, The Lord, he is the God; the 'Lord, he is the God.'

But without the help of Revelation, or even of Hiſtory; the contemplation of the works of nature, as we call them; the order, proportion, and uſe, of the ſeveral parts of the viſible world; the undeniable marks of deſign, and numberleſs inſtances of art inimitable; which appear evidently before us, in every region where we caſt our eye, the heavens, the earth, the ſea, the air; in the material, vegetable, animal world; in the body and in the mind of man; all theſe conſtitute a proof as convincing as a thouſand demonſtrations, that the author of them all is a Being endued with a vaſt extent

tent of power, and underſtanding, and with benevolence.

And if this diſpoſition be the *ſum* or *ſource* of all moral goodneſs; if the other virtues derive their quality of *good* from their inherent tendency to promote happineſs; or if they do but in effect promote it; then the ſame arguments which eſtabliſh this principle in the Supreme Being, will be a proof alſo of his other moral attributes.

But waving this argument, the conſtitution of the world itſelf affords diſtinct traces of *Juſtice* and *Mercy*, as well as *Goodneſs*, in its Author.

Though we dare not ſay that Juſtice is diſtributed perfectly; yet it is equally remote from truth to aſſert that the vicious, in the common courſe of things, are as ſucceſsful and happy as the good and virtuous. The frame of the world we live in is favourable to virtue, which is an argument of the *Juſtice* of it's Author.

His *mercy* appears in the proviſion he has made for the recovery of perſons who have involved themſelves in calamities by their vices; His *Patience* in the delay which is obſervable between the crime and the natural puniſhment of it, together with the intervening opportunities of eſcaping.

All theſe Arguments, however, are both liable to cavils, and alſo do only indicate theſe ſeveral diſpoſitions in the Divine Being in an imperfect degree.

But

But we have, I think, a proof of the moral Attributes of the Deity, every one of us within his own breaſt. We are aſſured by an inward *conſciouſneſs*, clear and certain, which needs no explanation, and leaves no room for doubt, that a regard to Juſtice, Truth, and Goodneſs, is more excellent than the violation of them. Theſe perceptions carry their own authority with them. Their command is a reaſon, a *Law*, which no perſon without ſelf-condemnation tranſgreſſes. And this law is obeyed, bad as the world is, often, though not ſo often as it ought; and would ever be obeyed by every perſon, were it not for the calls of Appetite, and the tumult of Paſſion. The mind of *Man*, alas! is often borne away by theſe againſt his better judgment, or is agitated perhaps alternately by a contrary impulſe, and fluctuates between *Deſire* and *Duty*.

But the *Divine Mind*, being liable to no ſuch commotions, muſt ever be directed by unerring wiſdom. There is no room for a civil war in the breaſt of the Omnipotent. He has no wants to ſupply, nor foes to fear; no appetites to importune, nor paſſions to pervert him. *Rectitude* therefore muſt be his Rule. While his infinite government ſteers it's courſe along the tide of Eternity, ſure and ſteady will be the regard to this immutable point, in the clear calm region of the Divine Boſom, which no clouds of ignorance can darken, nor ſtorms of temptation diſcompoſe.

In

In this perſuaſion therefore we reſt, There is an eternal, infinite Being. Who, himſelf owing his exiſtence to no other, is the cauſe from which all things have had their beginning. He made the world: and it is under laws of his appointment; and ſubject to the government of his will. He has all power, and wiſdom: and theſe attributes have been amply exerted in acts of goodneſs. He is the Father of the Univerſe. The methods indeed of his Providence are to us often incomprehenſible: yet have we ſufficient reaſon to believe that he guides himſelf by the rule of *right*; So that when we conform to the ſame rule we comply with his will, and concur with him in his deſigns.

Conſider now what encouragement this is to the practice of *virtue*. When you are doing good, you are doing what God doth, and what he wiſhes you to do. You are employed in the very ſame work with your Creator, and aſſiſting him to accompliſh his divine undertakings. You are advancing the end for which the earth itſelf was created; and according to your meaſure, may ſay, with the Redeemer himſelf, 'my Father worketh hitherto, and 'I work.'

Or if, in contemplating that principal part of the Creator's work expoſed to your inſpection, the nature and ſtate of man, you diſcern that it was not the indiſcriminate communication of good that was intended, by him who made us, but the welfare eſpecially of the good and

and virtuous, of the diſcreet, the diligent, the temperate, and the juſt; then let this, in like manner, be your object. Do you good eſpecially to the well-deſerving; relieve the neceſſitous, but thoſe moſt, who are ſober and induſtrious. 'He that giveth, let him do it 'with ſimplicity' indeed, but with prudence; 'he that ſheweth mercy, with cheerfulneſs,' and yet with diſcernment.

'The Lord is loving unto every man;—'but they that deal truly are his delight. He 'maketh his ſun to riſe on the evil and on the 'good;' but 'the eyes of the Lord are over the 'righteous,' and 'he delivereth the ſouls of his 'ſervants.' Draw as near as you can to the divine pattern, and 'be perfect even as your 'Father which is in heaven is perfect.'

Or laſtly, if you have been able to penetrate ſo far into the divine counſels, as to diſcover that it is not the happineſs even of good men, that is intended in this world, but only their ſupport in it, and their improvement in piety and virtue while they are paſſing through it to a better; let it be your care to advance this ſtep alſo in your imitation of God, and purſue the intentions of him who made you to the utmoſt.

'Do good to all, eſpecially to them who are 'of the houſhold of faith;' and among theſe moſt of all to the beſt, and do to them and all others the beſt ſervice, by promoting above all things their future welfare. This all perſons, even the pooreſt, may do by a pious example; others

others by that and many other ways, which will readily occur to ſuch as have a heart diſpoſed to find them.

Thus may your *mite*, proportioned to your ability, and coming from a good heart, be to you, as if you had fed the hungry, clothed the naked, viſited the ſick and impriſoned; as if you had been 'a guide of the blind, an in-'ſtructor of the fooliſh; a preacher and an 'Apoſtle. Though poor,' thus 'rich in good 'works;' however ignorant, 'wiſe unto ſal-'vation;' you ſhall 'ſhine as the brightneſs of 'the firmament, and, turning many to righ-'teouſneſs, as the ſtars for ever and ever.'

SERMON II.

JOHN xiv. 1.

Ye believe in God; believe alſo in me.

AMIDST innumerable and undeniable marks of divine wiſdom and goodneſs, we find in the world confuſion, ſin and miſery. Revelation informs us that it was not created in this diſordered ſtate; that a great change has taken place in it, occaſioned by the fault of a

human pair, it's firſt inhabitants; by which means their poſterity are fallen into a worſe condition than had been originally prepared for them by their gracious Creator. Death, which 'God made not,' took poſſeſſion of the world, and Guilt and Pain have a large dominion in it; and might have ſtretched their empire to a dreadful extent, had not a perſon of Divine Nature and Attributes, united, in a manner incomprehenſible, with the Supreme Father of all things, been pleaſed, by the Father's appointment, and out of his own inconceivable goodneſs, to interpoſe in our behalf.

He came down from heaven; and ſtill continuing to be one with the Supreme Nature, he aſſumed our's. He became man: he lived upon earth, did good, endured pain, preached piety and righteouſneſs, worked wonders, ſuffered death as a malefactor, reſtored himſelf to life, returned to heaven, and now governs his Church by the operation of yet another Divine Perſon, who with him and the Father, is one God, bleſſed for ever.

All this, you ſeem to ſay, is ſtrange and wonderful. It is ſo. The Divine exiſtence, eternity, infinity, which yet reaſon obliges us to acknowledge, is very wonderful. The divine government of the world, which we experience, is in many inſtances exceedingly aſtoniſhing. The world is filled with wonders; and if you attempt ignorantly to remove them, they

they become greater. If you deny what is ſtrange, you muſt admit what is impoſſible.

It is ſtrange, perhaps you think, that our firſt parents ſhould commit ſin. This part of the wonder, that any of *our kindred* ſhould do what was not right, *we* muſt not inſiſt on.

It is ſtrange that they were not immediately puniſhed with death. How! ſhall we make it a wonder that God is merciful? It muſt be a wonder then that we are living.

It is however, very ſtrange, you are pretty ſure, and hardly right, you humbly think, that their poſterity ſhould be involved in their guilt, and made to ſuffer for an offence that was not their own.

Now *firſt* of all, is it not ſurpriſing that this ſhould appear ſo ſtrange to us who have lived all our lives in a world in which the ſame thing has happened every day? Is any thing more common than to ſee men ſuffering the moſt grievous calamities, through the fault or only the folly of other perſons?

But this is *natural*. And who made it to be natural? Did not he who made the world?

A great change took place at the fall: do you know the particular manner in which it was effected? Can you ſay how far that was, or was not natural?

But, What think you of the remedy provided for this calamity, the redemption of man in Jeſus Chriſt? of the ſtate of happineſs offered him in heaven, inſtead of his earthly pa-

radiſe? Is not the ſeverity of your complaint ſoftened by theſe conſiderations?

But waving theſe anſwers, let us, for a moment, ſuppoſe that theſe things are indeed ſo ſtrange as to be incredible; that the fall and the redemption of man is all a fiction; and the world in as good a condition as it was at firſt, or was ever meant to be.

The *wickedneſs* and *miſery* that are in the world, ſtill remain in it, after all our ſuppoſitions: theſe are matters of fact, alas! and muſt be acknowledged by us all, whatever opinion we entertain concerning the cauſe of them. The ſtate of man, whether a fallen ſtate or no, is what it is. Evidently *the world lieth*, in a very great degree, in wickedneſs; the life of men, of all men, is full of trouble, of many is ſo diſtreſsful that it affects us with horrour, till death, very ſoon, the ſooner often the better, puts an end to it. Man appears upon the Sea of life, ſtruggles with waves and ſtorms for a few moments, and ſinks again into the abyſs, for ever.

And is this your vindication of God's love and goodneſs? This the beſt defence you can deviſe of thoſe 'tender mercies which are over 'all his works.'

It would be ſevere in him, you think, to degrade us to ſuch a ſad ſtate as this for the offence of our firſt Parents: but you can allow him to place us in it, without any inducement. Are our calamities leſſened for not being aſcribed to Adam? If our condition be unhappy,

is

is it not ſtill unhappy, whatever was the occaſion? with the aggravation of this reflection, that if it is as good as was at firſt deſigned, there ſeems to be ſomewhat the leſs reaſon to look for it's amendment.

Or will you ſay that the Supreme Being was not able to accommodate us in a better manner? or that he was not deſirous of doing it? that he is wholly unconcerned about us? or that he never made the world at all? and that we came into it of ourſelves, or by the help of fate or fortune?

Which now of theſe *truly* ſtrange ſuppoſitions ſhall we pleaſe to adopt? chooſing what is abſurd, to avoid what is wonderful; and driven by the fear of little difficulties, into great contradictions.

Indeed theſe and all other objections againſt the articles of revealed religion generally admit one ſhort anſwer from the conſideration of our own ignorance. We are not willing to acquieſce in that ſuperficial information which is imparted to us, but are deſirous to ſee to the bottom of every thing; and complain, or diſpute, when we are diſappointed: not conſidering that we know the whole of nothing; and that no ſyſtem of religion, or of irreligion, will ever place us above theſe difficulties.

Whatever Almighty God is pleaſed to teach, or to command, by the voice of Nature, or of Revelation, it is plainly and equally our duty to believe and do: it is of no conſequence which way he conveys this knowledge to us.

He

He hath created us by his power; he hath redeemed us by his mercy, through the mediation of his Son: if there is any perſon to whom neither of theſe truths is made known, he is innocent of all guilt in the ignorance or diſbelief of both; and if they are both ſo offered to us that but for ſome criminal obſtruction in ourſelves, we ſhould admit them; it is dangerous, and may be fatal to deny either.

There is, I fear, yet one more circumſtance, in which the Chriſtian revelation and the religion of nature bear to each other, unhappily, but too near a reſemblance; and that is in their *ſucceſs*; or more properly, in the *want* of it: they produce, neither of them, in any due degree, the effect they ought, the reformation of the world.

You admit, let us ſuppoſe, the religion of nature: ſo far you are certainly in the right. You allow that there is a God who made the world, and all things in it: therefore they are his: No doubt. He is your Father, Friend, and Lord; his relation to you is prior and ſuperiour to every other: his will is your ſupport, and life, and law. This you freely own.

Yes, in words you own it. But is the ſenſe of it impreſſed on your heart? are your actions governed by it? It is eaſy to ſay, in your diſcourſe, or prayers, that Almighty God is the Greateſt and Beſt of Beings, and to aſcribe to him 'the kingdom, the power, and 'the glory:' but doth he really rule in your breaſt, and in your life? Do you worſhip him devoutly

devoutly and conſtantly? do you honour and love him, 'with all your mind and ſtrength,' ſo that no other perſon or thing, not even your own deſires come in competition with him? Are you thankful for what he gives, content when he denies, reſigned when he takes away, patient when he afflicts, humble when he advances you, and when he depreſſes, neither petulant nor yet dejected? If you honour and love God above all things; you will do whatever you think will pleaſe, and nothing that you know offends him. And thus will be introduced into your life the whole train of virtues, whatever is 'good and acceptable in 'the ſight of God.'

Not that we *Chriſtians* have any reaſon for boaſting, but much for ſorrow, and for amendment. Your condemnation is not our acquittal. We are bound to every one of the ſame things, and more; by all the ſame reaſons, and by others: ſo that when we do amiſs, we are even more culpable.

We believe, with you, that God made, and we believe alſo that he redeemed us, and this by the death of his only begotten Son; that he loved us, corrupted and loſt, as we were, yet that he ſtill loved us to ſuch a degree, as to deliver up out of his boſom, him 'in whom 'he was always well pleaſed,' to be a man, and a ſacrifice, that we might be forgiven for his ſufferings, and received into heaven with him, through his merits and interceſſion.

But

But have we a juſt ſenſe of this redemption? Are our actions governed by the ſenſe of it? Aſk us, in your turn, every one of the ſame queſtions: can we 'anſwer one of a thouſand?' Where are all the graces and virtues ſuitable to our holy Faith, and bound upon us by ſo many obligations? Do our actions, any more than yours, correſpond to our principles? Are we better than other perſons whoſe belief is different? 'The life which we now live in the 'fleſh,' as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, do we 'live by 'the faith of the Son of God, who loved us, 'and gave himſelf for us?'

We ſtand diſputing and quarrelling about the religion of Nature and Revelation; but regard neither, much further than the mere profeſſion: Zealots for a ſyſtem which has no effect on our heart and life; contending each with eagerneſs for the articles of his faith; agreeing, on both ſides, to forget the duties of it.

Alas! the very reverſe of this is the method which reaſon and Chriſtianity alike preſcribe; to live every one of us according to the rules of that religion which we believe and profeſs, and recommend it to others by all fair arguments, and by an upright example; but by no other motives. I conclude with that ſhort precept of the Apoſtle: 'Follow peace with 'all men, and holineſs without which no man 'ſhall ſee the Lord.'

SER-

SERMON III.

LUKE i. 34.

Then ſaid Mary unto the Angel, how ſhall this be, ſeeing I know not a Man?

THE miracles attending the revelation of Chriſtianity may be conſidered as divided into two claſſes, and called the publick miracles, and the private.

Of the former ſort were the many cures performed by our Lord and his Apoſtles; the darkneſs at his crucifixion, his Aſcenſion into heaven, in the preſence of many ſpectators; prophecies of future events taken together with their accompliſhment; the very propagation of the Chriſtian religion in the world; and above all, that capital miracle, the beſt atteſted, and yet moſt amazing, the principal pillar on which the fabrick of Chriſtianity reſts, The *Reſurrection* of the Lord Jeſus from the dead.

Among the ſecond ſort, the private miracles, may be reckoned the appearance of an Angel in a dream to the huſband of the Virgin Mary, more than once; the viſion of Zacharias in the Temple; the divine glory ſeen by St. Stephen at the time of his Martyrdom; and many other ſupernatural events, of which there was no teſtimony, but that of the ſingle perſon on whom the miracle was wrought, or before whom

whom it was exhibited; and among these, especially that great miracle of the *Incarnation* of our Saviour Christ, without any human father, by the operation of the Holy Ghost.

Now the proper external proof of the Christian religion are the publick miracles. Nay they are the proof even of the private miracles; which are so far from yielding any help to the other parts of revealed religion, that they cannot expect to gain admittance for themselves, but must be content to attend upon the miracles which were publick. And when these are established; miraculous facts of which we have no witness, and revealed doctrines of which we have no natural proof, may be ranked together; and will be both equally supported by the testimony of Scripture, which rests on the miracles that were wrought openly for the proof of it.

There does not appear to be any thing *incredible* in this doctrine of the miraculous Incarnation of Jesus Christ, to those who admit any miracles at all. That a child should come into the world without a father, is not harder to account for, than that a dead body should come to life, or a living man walk upon the water, or distempers be cured by the speaking of a word. None of these things are natural: but they are all, equally, as far as we can see, in the power of God.

Except we believe the world to have existed from eternity, and the race of mankind to have been continued down to this day by an infinite succession,

ſucceſſion, without any beginning at all: we muſt be obliged to acknowledge that at leaſt two human perſons were once brought into being, in ſome way different from that which is now the eſtabliſhed courſe of nature. All perſons cannot have been born as men are now. The Redeemer of mankind therefore was not the only perſon who had not two human parents. What was once, might be again; or ſomething equally different from that which is now the object of experience.

It is not expected that this miraculous conception of our Lord ſhall gain credit from the teſtimony of the mother, or from the relation of an hiſtorian. It is to the publick, undoubted, innumerable miracles of the Redeemer's life, and to his well atteſted Reſurrection from the dead, that we appeal for the ſupport of the miracle of his Incarnation and Birth. 'If he 'did not the works of his *Father*, believe him 'not.'

But the creation of a human pair, at the beginning of the world, it may be ſaid, was plainly neceſſary, and is therefore eaſily believed; but the birth of an infant without an earthly father is the leſs credible, becauſe we ſee no reaſon for it.

Is this a proof that there was none? Has the Supreme Mind no reaſons but what we are acquainted with? Does the Divine Wiſdom take us for counſellors?

A holy and good God, as we ſhould think, would create men in a ſtate of virtue and happineſs.

pineſs: But mankind we ſee, and feel, alas! are in a ſtate of ſin and miſery. How comes this event to paſs? Will any reaſon that you are maſter of, explain it to us?

We know indeed how it happened from Scripture. It was owing to the *Fall*. But the Scripture informs us alſo of the *Incarnation*, and tells us that the fall of man was the reaſon of it. Can you ſhew that it is not a good reaſon? Are you ſure you could have redeemed the world better? or at all otherwiſe? It is written, 'Except a man be born again, he can-'not ſee the kingdom of God:' and it may be, for any thing you know to the contrary, that men could no more be *regenerated* without this miracle of the Incarnation, than they could ever have been *born* without the other, of the Creation.

Or if you refuſe the name of *miracle* to the firſt creation of man, becauſe a miracle has relation to a courſe of nature ſuppoſed to be already eſtabliſhed, it will make no material difference. The thing will not be changed by the alteration of the name. There is no reaſon to think that the creation of man required any leſs degree of power for being new; or that the miraculous conception, by being contrary to an eſtabliſhed courſe, was therefore either impoſſible, or in any degree leſs neceſſary.

But when we ſay that Jeſus, our Redeemer, was born of a virgin, who 'was found with 'child of the Holy Ghoſt;' we mean ſomething more than that his birth was miraculous, and

and brought to pafs by the extraordinary power of God. We intend to declare, 'that he 'was truly the Son of God.'

'The Holy Ghoft fhall come upon thee, and 'the power of the higheft fhall overfhadow 'thee: therefore alfo that holy thing which 'fhall be born of thee fhall be called, *that is*, '*fhall be*, the Son of God.' The glorious truth which is covered under this veil of words is not, it muft be acknowledged, clearly underftood by us; yet are they not mere empty founds, wholly without meaning. The very vileft weed on the fea fhore is the effect of God's power, and indeed a difplay of his wifdom. Men are of a nobler nature: ftill, they are alfo the work of God's hand; and bearing a nearer refemblance to his perfections, and enjoying a greater portion of his care, they have been ftyled his children. Spirits, fuperior to man, may alfo have been called the fons of God, or even his firft born, for the fame reafons, and becaufe they were in being before us. Language is imperfect, and metaphors muft be much ufed. Angels, or certain men, may have been called even Gods, on account of their great authority and power. But ftill, fo much we think we difcern of this fublime fubject, that Jefus is the Son of God, in a fenfe different from all thefe; derived from the Supreme Father, in a fuperior and more immediate manner; and not only 'among many brethren the 'firft born,' but among them all, the *Only Begotten.*

The

The Redeemer of Mankind was, and is, Man as well as God. The divine nature was united with the human in Jeſus Chriſt. The ſubject here too is, no doubt, in a vaſt degree, incomprehenſible. Language is greatly liable to abuſe, and when not abuſed, it is both imperfect, and apt to be miſtaken. Yet the doctrine thus delivered is not merely nothing.

God is infinite: he is every where preſent. We live and move not only by his favour, but *in him*; ſo do all other Beings. 'If I climb up 'into heaven, thou art there; if I go down to 'hell, thou art there alſo.' He upholds, penetrates, pervades, actuates all things. The moſt rapid cherubims move by his force: the very clods of the field cleave together by his perpetual, and, if one may ſo ſpeak, perſonal operation. At leaſt, the deepeſt philoſophers have had recourſe to this expedient; and, after the moſt weariſome reſearches, like the dove ſent out from the ark, have found no other place where to fix their foot, but that whence they ſet out; no ſolution, but in the Divine preſence, of the moſt trivial, as well as extraordinary appearances.

Yet, though we pretend not to comprehend either, ſo far we make bold to pronounce, this was not the preſence of the Supreme Father with his only begotten Son; nor this the union of God with the man Chriſt Jeſus. Stocks and ſtones are not God: even 'angels, which 'are greater in power and might,' refuſe to be worſhipped. But the Redeemer, though 'made

'of

'of a woman, *and* in all things like unto his 'brethren,' is the proper object of our faith, and hope, and love, and every other religious affection and action: as the Scripture teaches in many places. We praiſe him, we pray to him. We 'believe in God.' We 'believe alſo 'in *him*; *and* honour the Son even as we ho-'nour the Father:' although we know, that 'there is one God, and there is none other but 'he; *and that* he will not give his glory to ano-'ther.'

Nor is this *hypoſtatical* union, becauſe it is incomprehenſible, therefore incredible alſo. Nor indeed does it appear to be all more incomprehenſible, than the union of our own ſoul and body, the conjunction of Matter and Spirit. Which yet philoſophy alone, without revelation, has taught men to acknowledge: though theſe ſubſtances are, to our thinking, as incongruous as any; nor have we the leaſt conception how they can be capable of intercourſe, or any mutual operation.

That *Matter* itſelf ſhould ever begin to *be*, or even but begin to *move*, is as unintelligible as any article of faith, before it is depraved by our explanations. Yet Experience aſſures us of the beginning of motion; though it has been diſputed: what has not? And Philoſophy tells us that the ſoul of man is immaterial. We yield our aſſent to theſe teachers, though the points have oft been controverted, and can never be comprehended. What is the reaſon that the difficulties which we ſo readily paſs over in theſe

theſe caſes, ſhould be ſo inſuperable in the other? Articles of faith are eſtabliſhed, we may be bold to aſſert, upon as good grounds as ſyſtems of phyſics: as much regard is due to doctrines of religion, at leaſt, as to thoſe of any ſect of philoſophers.

Yes; but this regard cannot always be paid at ſo eaſy a rate. The head would often be convinced, but the heart remonſtrates: the underſtanding might bend, but the will is ſtubborn. We might perhaps yield our aſſent to religion, but it demands obedience; and requires not only belief, but practice. Every one of its doctrines is to be fruitful in grace and good works; and however ignorant we may be of the manner, or reaſons, we are to be well acquainted with the uſe.

The word was incarnate; he left the glory which he 'had with the Father before the 'world was,' and entered into this houſe of clay: he took upon him willingly the infirmities of the human nature: God was made man for the ſalvation of ſinners.

Could he not have ſaved them with leſs trouble? We ſay nothing. How was it poſſible for him to aſſume their nature? Silence ſuits with ignorance. What ſhould make him willing to do it? Here indeed we are able to anſwer: it was becauſe he *loved* them. And one thing more we can comprehend, that they ought alſo to love him; be devoutly thankful for his incomprehenſible mercy; and if there is any thing in their power which may contribute

tribute to the ſucceſs of this gracious undertaking, to do it.

There may be many obſcurities attending the doctrine; there is none at all in this conſequence, that they who are thus redeemed, are no longer their own. They 'are bought 'with a price, *and ought* therefore to glorify 'God in their body and in their ſpirit, which 'are God's'. Now doubly his: ſince he who made, has again purchaſed them to himſelf; and, as far as we can judge, at a much greater price.

The Incarnation of the Son of God, however incomprehenſible, is the plaineſt as well as the ſtrongeſt reaſon that ever was, or can poſſibly be offered, for gratitude towards the Supreme Father, who gave his dearly beloved and only begotten Son, for our redemption; and towards that Divine Son, who loved us, and gave himſelf for us: for truſt in God, who having *delivered up for us* his Son, cannot but *with* him alſo freely give us all things: for humility and condeſcenſion to our inferiors; in obedience to the particular command, in imitation of the wondrous example of him, who being poſſeſſed of divine greatneſs, the 'Maker and Heir 'of all things, *yet* made himſelf of no reputa-'tion, took upon him the form of a ſervant; 'was made in the likeneſs of men; and being 'found in faſhion as a man, he humbled him-'ſelf, and became obedient.'

This doctrine of Chriſtianity is a recommendation of purity, directing us to reverence

that human body which he honoured by being born of a virgin; and may reaſonably induce us to have a very high regard, but free from ſuperſtition and idolatry, to her who was ſo ſignally favoured as to be made the Parent of the Son of God.

Laſtly the incarnation of Chriſt is an argument for univerſal obedience, and the practice of all virtues. Since this was the end of his coming into the world, 'to purify to himſelf a 'peculiar people, zealous of good works:' and ſince without this, we ſhall not only fruſtrate the grace of God, but render the greateſt bleſſing that ever was conferred on mankind, a calamity to us. Every mercy which we abuſe, we convert into a curſe. 'This is the condemna-'tion,' it is an aggravation of our guilt, and will add to our puniſhment, 'that light is 'come into the world, and men loved darkneſs. 'If ye were blind, ye ſhould have no ſin: but 'now ye ſay, we ſee;' ſince, as you acknowledge, you know better, or at leaſt have the means of information; *therefore your ſin remaineth.* The more gracious the divine offers, the more criminal muſt it be either ſcornfully to reject, or wickedly to pervert them. 'He 'that deſpiſed Moſes' law, died without mercy: 'of how much ſorer puniſhment ſhall he be 'thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot 'the Son of God?'

SERMON IV.

1 COR. i. 18.

The preaching of the Croſs is to them that periſh, Fooliſhneſs; but unto us which are ſaved, it is the Power of God.

THERE is nothing, how well and wiſely ſoever it is ordered, by man, or God, but exceptions may be taken againſt it, by the ignorant or ill diſpoſed; and that very circumſtance be made the matter of complaint, which ought to be moſt of all the ſubject of applauſe and admiration. The Croſs of Chriſt has been long 'a rock of offence' in the way of unbelievers; 'to the Jews a ſtumbling block, to the Greeks 'fooliſhneſs.' A Saviour of the world who could not ſave himſelf! A Divine perſon relinquiſhing the glories of his own nature for the miſeries of mortal life, and the torment of crucifixion! If the Son of God, had appeared with a ſplendour anſwerable to ſuch a character; if he had deſcended viſibly from heaven in a chariot of fire, and with Legions of Angels, to take vengeance on his enemies, and put his followers in poſſeſſion of riches, glory, power, proſperity, and pleaſure; ſuch propoſals as theſe would have engaged attention, all nations had been ſoon made proſelytes; and nothing ſeen or heard on earth, but the moſt cheerful ſubmiſſion, and ſincere thankſgivings.

This is the wiſdom of man! Such a Saviour, and ſuch ſalvation, would, no doubt, in our idea have been the moſt proper. Alas! there is no end of our folly, when we purſue the ravings of imagination; and liſten to the vanity of our wiſhes, inſtead of the voice of Reaſon, and the ſober counſels of Experience.

Shall we conclude then, upon the ſtrength of ſuch a wiſe harangue, that Jeſus could not come from God, ſince he neither brought theſe benefits, of which we are ſo greatly deſirous, along with him; nor delivered us from ſickneſs, ſorrow, and death, and a great number of other evils, which are ſo grievous to us?

But if Almighty God hath not *redeemed* the world; I preſume he *made* it. And hath he made it to be a ſtate of ſuch felicity as you require? or exempted it from the afflictions to which you object? The world itſelf, it ſeems, came from God, though it contains all theſe bad things: and why might not the goſpel, though it does not remove them?

Will you ſay, that the world, as it came out of the hand of God, at firſt, was better than it is at preſent; and that theſe evils were introduced into it, on account of the *fall* of our firſt parents?

What you ſay is true: but where, pray, did you learn it? This is not an article of natural religion, but of revelation. You believe the fall of man in Adam, on the teſtimony of Scripture; why then will you not admit his redemption by Chriſt on the ſame Authority?

But

But let us suppose it to be as you have said; that man was not liable to these hardships at first, but has forfeited his happy state by his disobedience. Upon what grounds then do you insist that he should be placed again in it? Man was created happy; and became wicked. Some other situation must be sought out for him: a paradise is no place for his amendment.

Persons who can make such high demands of happiness, must have formed their expectations, one would think, from works of God unknown to us, and worlds very different from this which we inhabit. The Maker of the earth on which we live, does not appear, by any thing we see in it, to have intended it for a place of pleasure and indulgence, but of discipline and trial; offering, together with a sufficient, but mostly moderate supply of our necessities, abundant matter for the exercise and improvement of our virtue. In this view, the world was created and redeemed with equal wisdom; and every thing in both these dispensations properly adapted to the end which God designed.

But when we seek happiness here, we look for what was never found. The plant grows not in this soil. But infirmities and afflictions; pain of body and anguish of mind; cares and fears, and disappointments, both in the pursuit and possession of our wishes; with clamorous passions and eager appetites, impatient of denial, inflamed by indulgence; and a multitude of other evils, which no tongue can count, or medicine heal, sticking close to the life of man

man in all ſtations, and purſuing him through every period of the little, laborious interval between the cradle and the grave.

Such is the condition, in which it has ſeemed good to God to place us; as we all ſee, and feel; ordered according to his own eternal counſels, not our blind will; little accommodated to our wiſhes, but choſen by his unerring wiſdom.

And 'ſuch a high prieſt alſo became us;' was ſuitable to the ſtate of ſuch ſinners; 'touched with the feelings of our infirmities; 'and in all points tempted like as we are, yet 'without ſin.'

The cup of which we are made to drink, is offered to the Son of God, and 'the captain of 'our ſalvation made perfect through ſufferings.'

But thoſe ſufferings are alſo the 'price of 'our redemption,' the conſideration on account of which we ſinners are received to mercy. 'Without ſhedding of blood there is 'no remiſſion; He is the propitiation of our 'ſins.'

Expiatory ſacrifices were in uſe from the earlieſt times, and were expreſsly required by Almighty God of the nation of the Jews. This Divine Perſon, therefore, that he might *have ſomewhat* much more valuable *to offer*, aſſumed 'a body that was prepared for him,' and offered himſelf 'as a Lamb without ſpot,' to God. He had no ſins of his own to expiate: but, regardleſs of pleaſure, eaſe, and life, and moved by the moſt exalted devotion to God, and unbounded charity to man, he gave his ſide

to

to the ſpear, he ſtretched out his arms upon the croſs; and made 'a full, perfect, and ſuffi-'cient ſacrifice, oblation, and ſatisfaction for 'the ſins of the whole world.'

But you would be glad to know the reaſons of theſe wonderful counſels, and comprehend the whole myſtery of man's redemption.

Do you comprehend the other plans of Providence in ſo complete and maſterly a manner? Is this the only counſel of God which eludes your inquiry?

God hath been pleaſed to give life, you ſee, to other creatures on earth beſides man: did he intend them to be happy? are they always ſo? can any of them ever have deſerved to be otherwiſe?

Perhaps they were made for man. But why muſt they *die* in order to ſuſtain him? It is written that 'man doth not live by bread alone, 'but by every word that proceedeth out of the 'mouth of God:' why did he not ſpeak this word? What! was there no ſupport to be found for him in the magazines of omnipotence, but by the ſlaughter of ſo many victims? unwilling victims?

What ſay you to this part of the Divine government? Do you chooſe to cenſure it? Are you able to explain it?

You ſee your own children perhaps ruined by your vices; then aſk if it be poſſible that any perſon ſhould ſuffer but for his own offences. Or rather, I hope, you ſee them become virtuous and happy by your care and kindneſs; and

and no longer wonder to be told that when they and you are made partakers together of life eternal, you will all be indebted for ſo great a bleſſing to ſomething further than your own endeavours to obtain it.

The doctrine, that 'God is in Chriſt reconciling the world unto himſelf,' myſterious as it muſt ever appear to the eye of Curioſity, opens to the ingenuous heart reflexions of the higheſt importance. And who may take upon him to ſay, that ſo great an uſe was not even among the reaſons of this awful diſpenſation?

The redemption of mankind by the ſufferings and death of the Son of God, is the greateſt proof of divine Mercy; and, at the ſame time, to a noble, nay, to any mind, the greateſt diſcouragement to vice, that is poſſible to be conceived by man; the ſtrongeſt obligation that is in all nature to gratitude, the ſublimeſt and moſt forcible inducement to repentance.

Believe then that the Almighty Father delivered up his only begotten, for this very end, to ſhew us in their full light, both the unbounded extent of his goodneſs, and the inexpreſſible danger of our impenitence: to teach to poor fallen man, the love, and the fear of him that made him. In the chain of being deſcending from heaven to earth, the baleful effects even of human vice are felt higher than all our conceptions can reach. 'God is love:' there is nothing he is not willing to do for his creatures; yet obſtinate diſobedience can fruſtrate

trate all the efforts of omnipotent goodneſs. 'What ſhall I do? I will ſend my beloved Son. 'If we ſin wilfully after that we have received '*this* knowledge of the truth, there remaineth 'no more ſacrifice for ſins; but a certain fear-'ful looking for of judgment, and fiery indig-'nation.'

As the proofs of God's grace and goodneſs are multiplied, ſo is the dread of his diſpleaſure increaſed; and this on a double account: the condemnation is more certain, the puniſhment more terrible.

'Behold therefore the goodneſs and ſeverity 'of God:' behold them brought near to us now, by the death of Chriſt, and ſpread out to an amazing magnitude: ſee, what he has prepared for the ſin of man! how rich a ranſom! what tremendous vengeance! He offers you the choice of either.

We accept, Lord, thy tender of grace; and are willing 'to be conformed to the image of 'thy Son:' embracing whatever ſufferings thou art pleaſed to allot, 'that we may be made 'partakers of Chriſt.' We trace his ſteps through the vale of tears; without impatience, yet preſſing forward; not complaining of labour, yet deſirous of reſt. We are encompaſſed with troubles, but our eye is fixt on immortality; we ſuffer, in hope; and 'rejoice, 'with trembling.'

And oh! When he who once appeared in the form of a ſervant, and died as a malefactor and a ſlave, ſhall come again with power, and

and arrayed with his Father's glory, then alſo may we 'be like him; if ſo be that we ſuffer 'with him,' may we be 'glorified together.' Let us never be found among thoſe truly miſerable, who 'have their portion of happineſs 'in this life;' thoſe utterly loſt, for whom 'Chriſt is dead in vain;' that ungrateful impious number, who 'refuſe him that ſpeaketh '*whether* on earth *or* from heaven;' and whoſe guilt and condemnation are but the more increaſed, by all that God hath done, and God hath ſuffered for their ſalvation.

SERMON V.

ACTS ii. 31.

His Soul was not left in Hell, neither his fleſh did ſee corruption.

WHEN the Saviour of the world had now been ſuſpended, with his arms ſtretched out, and his hands and feet nailed to the ignominious tree, from the third to the ninth hour; he perceived at length the approach of that welcome meſſenger, Death; and having 'received the vinegar, He ſaid, It is finiſhed: 'and

'and he bowed his head, and gave up the 'ghoſt.'

'It is finiſhed.' The important work, for which my Father ſent me, and I came willingly into the world, is at laſt accompliſhed. I have done, and have now ſuffered, the whole will of God. The bitter 'cup which might 'not paſs away from me,' is emptied to the dregs. It remains that I repoſe a moment after this painful conflict. I will appear on the third day with the palm of victory, and again in the pomp of triumph at the day of judgment.

The Redeemer had no further ſufferings, that we know of, to endure after his death. It is written that 'his ſoul was not left in hell, 'neither his fleſh did ſee corruption.' But nothing is more common in Scripture than a repetition of the ſame ſentiment in different words. The word Soul often denotes the *Perſon*, without regard to the diſtinction between Soul and Body, and that which is here rendered *hell*, may mean the *grave*, or the ſtate and place of the dead, without implying either reward or torment.

The human Soul of our Lord was by death ſeparated from the Body; and remained, till his reſurrection, in the place or ſtate of unclothed Spirits.

But it's abode there was not long. The departed Soul, and the crucified Body of the Redeemer were ſoon re-united; and, according to his own expreſs promiſe, on the third day

day he roſe again from the dead. The witneſſes of this important event, are competent, clear, and full.

They who of all men had the beſt knowledge of the perſon of Chriſt, did themſelves *ſee*, and *hear*, and *handle* him, after his reſurrection. 'Of theſe men which have compa-'nied with us all the time that the Lord Jeſus 'went in and out among us, beginning from 'the baptiſm of John, unto that ſame day that 'he was taken up from us, muſt one be or-'dained to be a witneſs with us of his reſur-'rection.' They had been his attendants for ſome years before his paſſion; and converſed with him forty days after it. They do not amuſe us with imaginations or conjecture: it is not a matter of tradition or probability which they deliver. But, 'That which we have ſeen 'with our eyes, and our hands have handled of 'the word of life, that which we have ſeen 'and heard declare we unto you.' The Apoſtles had the repeated evidence of every ſenſe, for the truth of the fact which they publiſhed to the world: and if they aſſure us that their 'Lord is riſen indeed; *it is becauſe* he ſhew-'ed himſelf alive after his paſſion, by many '*infallible* proofs.'

The witneſſes of our Lord's reſurrection were alſo *numerous*. 'He was ſeen of Cephas, 'then of the twelve: after that, he was ſeen 'of five hundred brethren at once:' what an air of truth in the words that follow! 'Of 'whom the greater part remain unto this pre-'ſent.'

'ſent.' It is obſtinacy then, or vice, or folly, or any thing but reaſon that ſupports us, if we refuſe to yield our aſſent, when 'we are 'compaſſed about with ſo great a cloud of 'witneſſes.'

Nor are we yet poſſeſſed of the entire amount of their teſtimony, unleſs we reflect that they were moſt undoubtedly *uncorrupt*. To what end, for what purpoſe ſhould they attempt to impoſe upon mankind? What intereſts or views of their own were theſe poor men purſuing? At what ſcope could they poſſibly aim? Or by what human principle be influenced?

Perhaps *Ambition*. Yes; you have detected their latent paſſion: they were indeed ambitious; aſpiring to the great, but yet unenvied honour, of ſuffering in the cauſe of God; the dignity of bearing contempt and inſult, for the ſake of religion, truth, and virtue. 'When they had called the Apoſtles, and 'beaten them, they commanded that they 'ſhould not ſpeak in the name of Jeſus: and 'they departed from the preſence of the coun-'cil, rejoicing that they were counted worthy 'to ſuffer ſhame for his name; Unto you it is 'given,' as a peculiar favour and honour, 'Unto you it is given in the behalf of Chriſt, 'not only to believe on him, but alſo to ſuffer 'for his ſake.

Or it was *pleaſure* perhaps thoſe fooliſh perſons had in view, and the plan of Chriſtianity was projected as a ſcheme of ſenſual enjoyment.

ment, Fooliſh indeed! if this was the object of their purſuits. Their pleaſures were as little deſirable as their honours. The only pleaſures they expected, or experienced, beſide the ſatisfaction of a good conſcience, and the hopes of another life, were the pleaſures of being ſcourged and beaten, of being impriſoned, and tortured, and killed. 'If in this life 'only we have hope in Chriſt, we are of all 'men moſt miſerable.'

Not only miſerable, but impious, and mad, to abandon their friends, and family, and country, for the pleaſure of ſpreading a known falſhood, and the reward of dying, both in body and ſoul, for the ſupport of it.

But what Sceptic was ever ſatisfied? What caviller confuted? The adverſaries of our faith finding no further reſources on the plain ground of common ſenſe, make their laſt retreat into the thorns of ſubtilty.

The reſurrection, it ſeems, was an event ſo ſtrange, that no teſtimony whatever is enough to prove it: the ſtory, we may be ſure, is not true; whoever he be that tells it.

On what foundation pray, do you build an aſſurance ſo very abſolute?

On the foundation of Experience.

As how?

I am to tell you, then, that we know nothing of the eſſence of *cauſality*; but found all our aſſent upon *ſimilitude*.

I am not ſure that I comprehend you.

You

You cannot be poſſeſſed of ſo fine an argument in its perfection, without having recourſe to the original Inventor: it may ſuffice to let you know in brief, that we believe always what is moſt *likely*, and call that moſt likely, which moſt *reſembles* what we have before met with.

But things often fall out that were not likely.

Yes; ſo often, that we find it, in general, likely that they ſhould; and in each particular caſe reflect which of the two is leſs likely, that the thing ſhould be as it is repreſented, or the reporter repreſent it falſely.

Have you ever found in the courſe of your experience that any thing was not true, which had been as well atteſted as the reſurrection?

It was a miracle: experience therefore, univerſal experience declares againſt it.

That of the *five hundred brethren* who ſaw it, was, ſure, on the other ſide.

You muſt appeal to preſent experience. Nature we find unchangeable.

Nature! When I diſpute with you about Chriſtianity, I ſuppoſe that you believe a God.

You ſuppoſe perhaps too faſt.

Then I have no further diſpute with you: I leave you to other hands. Chriſtianity deſires no greater honour than to be received by every one that is not an Atheiſt.

Suppoſe there be a God: what then?

Why, then he made the world.

Well.

Well.

And a multitude of things muſt have been done at that time of the Creation, which are not comprehended within the preſent courſe of nature. Every animal, every vegetable, muſt have been brought into Being at firſt in ſome manner of which the world now affords no examples. Of this we have no experience, yet we allow it to be true; and we need no teſtimony, for we know it muſt have happened.

And if the Son of God were to aſſume our nature a ſecond time, and be once more *crucified, and buried*; according to the unalterable laws of the Univerſe, he muſt riſe again from the grave, and 'the pains of death be looſed '*as before*, becauſe it was not POSSIBLE that 'he ſhould be holden of it.'

The opinion that this preſent life is the whole of man, that death puts an entire end to his Being, and there can be nothing for any one to hope or fear after it, is of all the moſt contrary to religion, and deſtructive to virtue. This great error is in a ſpecial manner confuted by our Lord's reſurrection; and the doctrine of a future ſtate eſtabliſhed beyond the reach of controverſy.

He had indeed taken care, during his life, to inculcate a truth of ſo much conſequence, and confirm it both by his authority and by arguments. 'Be not afraid of them that kill the 'body, and after that have no more that they 'can do. He is not a God of the dead, but of 'the living: for all live unto him.' But our Lord

Lord has now demonſtrated this article of faith to the ſenſes of mankind; and by raiſing himſelf to life he gave at the ſame time a proof and a ſpecimen of the great doctrine he had before delivered. Do we diſregard his teſtimony? are his arguments not convincing? yet what can we object to ſo plain a fact? ſhall we diſpute alſo againſt experience?

We are taught further to expect the reſurrection of the *body*. The light of reaſon has been able to induce many good men to look for another life after death. But they did not extend their hopes to the reſurrection of the body. They only truſted that they ſhould not periſh wholly, but their ſouls might ſurvive the diſſolution of this earthly frame. We now ſee that the body alſo ſhall be partaker of the life to come. The hand of death, though it lays hold on us, can keep nothing which belongs to us. The exquiſite knot, ſo rudely broken, ſhall be tied again, never to be diſſolved more. 'Behold my hands and my feet; that it is I 'myſelf: handle me, and ſee; for a ſpirit hath 'not fleſh and bones, as ye ſee me have.'

The *dominion* of our Lord is alſo connected with his reſurrection; which was his entrance, as it were, upon his univerſal government. 'All power is given unto me in heaven, and in 'earth. To this end Chriſt both died, and roſe, 'and revived, that he might be Lord both of 'the dead and living.'

Laſtly, that moſt important article of faith, a *future judgment*, is confirmed by the reſur-

rection of our Lord; who is the appointed judge, to whom this high office is committed in reward of his great humiliation; and whose own return to life, and exaltation to power and glory, is the greatest instance, and the surest pledge of the just judgment of God. 'As the 'Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth 'them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he 'will. For the Father judgeth no man; but 'hath committed all judgement unto the Son. 'The hour is coming when the dead shall hear 'the voice of the Son of God: and they that 'hear shall live. For as the Father hath life 'in himself, so hath he given to the Son to 'have life in himself; and hath given him au-'thority to execute judgement also, because he 'is the Son of man.'

SERMON VI.

HEBR. ii. 10.

For it became him, for whom are all Things, and by whom are all Things, in bringing many Sons unto Glory, to make the Captain of their Salvation perfect through Sufferings.

THOSE are commonly the fittest persons to command, who have before learned to obey. Men are best qualified for places of authority by subjection. 'Tis in this School they learn to bend

bend their ſtubborn will, to break the impetuoſity and fierceneſs ſo natural to the human mind, and acquire that patience of reſtraint, which is both becoming and uſeful in every condition of life, and moſt of all in the higheſt. Being thus made acquainted with the difficulties of thoſe duties which they are authorized to enjoin, they become the more equitable in their commands, reſerved in their cenſures, and gentle in their puniſhments. Nor can it well be expected that any thing leſs than a long courſe of rigid diſcipline ſhould be able to produce ſuch a permanent principle of moderation as will be always wanted amidſt the means, and ſolicitations of indulgence.

Accordingly we may obſerve that, as the race of mankind, being intended for a higher ſtation among the works of their Creator, are trained up for it by the trials and troubles of which the world is full; ſo alſo many a particular perſon, whom God hath deſigned to raiſe in this preſent life to an extraordinary degree of greatneſs, has in the wiſdom of his Providence been exerciſed by a ſeries of afflictions, as remarkable as that advancement to which they have conducted him.

You call to mind the example of that virtuous youth, who became the ſupport of the old Patriarch's family, Lord of all the land of Egypt, and a Father to Pharaoh; but not till he had firſt taſted of the bitter cup of adverſity, and ſeen himſelf both a priſoner and a ſlave.

You caſt your eye upon that forlorn fugitive, who eſcapes alone and naked from a houſe ſurrounded by aſſaſſins; he is purſued from one wilderneſs to another, and *hunted* (it is his own word) through all the mountains of Iſrael, by one who has been indebted for victory to his valour, and to his mercy for life; till he is driven to ſeek ſhelter amongſt the enemies he had vanquiſhed, and to aſſume the maſk of madneſs: yet is he ſtill the anointed of the Lord; deſtined to be the Prince of his choſen people, and the Father of the Son of God.

And that very Son himſelf, though he had no evil habits to eradicate, nor ſtubborn heart to tame; though in no danger of being corrupted by power, or tempted in any ſtate of exaltation to refuſe the counſels of moderation and mercy; yet was he made conformable to the common pattern, and went up to the throne of his Father by the ſame ſteps of ſorrow.

Labour, want, and pain, are the beaten road to greatneſs. And 'it became him, for whom 'are all things, and by whom are all things, in 'bringing many ſons to glory, to make the 'captain of their ſalvation perfect through 'ſufferings:' To conduct him to his ſupreme dominion, through a previous ſtate of humiliation and ſorrow; and deal with him, though not for the ſame reaſons, yet in the ſame manner as with thoſe whom he 'is not aſhamed to 'call brethren.'

'He did no ſin, neither was guile found in 'his mouth.' If the purification of his own heart

heart had been the end propoſed, all his ſufferings had been ſuperfluous. He was ever decked with the 'Robe of righteouſneſs.' It was not neceſſary thus to clothe him with 'the veſture dipped in blood.'

But 'though he were a Son, yet learned he 'obedience by the things which he ſuffered.' He was made acquainted with the ſevereſt trials of virtue; called to ſubmiſſion in it's hardeſt inſtances. He was taught by his own experience and feeling how painful the paſſage is through the ſtorms of human life: how difficult that diſcipline by which the children of God are trained up to happineſs. And 'being 'made perfect,' having finiſhed his courſe of afflictions, and poſſeſſing the reward of them, his place at the right hand of God, the exerciſe of all 'power in heaven and in earth; he be-'came the author of eternal ſalvation unto all 'them that obey him.' He governs the church which is yet left behind him upon earth; and by his word and ordinances, his Providence and Spirit, he conducts all thoſe who are willing to be thus led, along the ſame road, to the ſame place, whither he is gone before: That being firſt made 'conformable to his death,' they may become 'partakers of his reſurrection;' and following him through the paths of pain and trouble, may join in his triumphant aſcenſion; and that 'where he is they may be alſo'.

Since then the Son of God incarnate was made to paſs through a ſtate of very ſevere ſufferings, before he aſcended up into heaven; and

and ſince his ſaints and ſervants have in this reſpect been required to tread in his ſteps; we cannot but *know* what our lot is like to be in going through the ſame world.

Nor ſhould we only learn to look for afflictions, we ſhould be *willing* to find them, when we reflect that they have fallen ſo largely to the ſhare of ſo many perſons, better than ourſelves, and of the Son of God himſelf.

Nay, we ſhould be even *thankful* for our ſufferings, did we conſider the ends for which they are inflicted on us, and the great good we receive from them.

It was indeed on *our* account, that the Redeemer ſubmitted to ſo low a ſtate of humiliation and ſorrow. He had no depravities of heart to atone for, or to correct. Still, he died; for our admonition, and encouragement; for the confirmation of our faith; and for the expiation of our ſins. And yet, even to himſelf, his ſufferings were not without very valuable fruits, the increaſe both of his honour and happineſs, by the gratitude and ſalvation of a world of ſinners. He could not proceed to his glorious reſurrection, and the triumph of his aſcenſion, but through the gate of death. The very dominion which he now exerciſes over all things that are in heaven and earth is the purchaſe of his own condemnation before the tribunal of an unjuſt judge. 'He became 'obedient unto death. Wherefore God alſo 'hath highly exalted him, and given him a 'name which is above every name; that at the

'name

'name of Jesus every knee should bow, of 'things in heaven, and things in earth, and 'things under the earth. And hath given him 'authority to execute judgement also, because 'he is the Son of man.'

But the sufferings, which to him were only *glorious*, are *necessary* to us. Our condition requires this treatment. We are sick of a disease which will yield to no other application. Into what excesses should we not run headlong without this seasonable restraint! Humanity, Moderation, Charity, and even Justice, are too seldom seen in the world, as it is: but the very footsteps of these virtues would not be visible upon the earth, if Adversity were banished out of it. Eager Appetites, clamorous Passions, hearken to no other call. The voice of Reason cannot reach them. As full of unhappiness as the world is, men still find courage to be wicked: and the little of virtue that yet remains among us, is chiefly owing to this salutary discipline.

We thank God, perhaps, when we do thank him, for prosperity; for health, plenty, success and honour. We do well. They are the gifts of God's Providence, and demand our acknowledgements. But they are not the only blessings his goodness confers on us. Adversity should be added to the number of his favours, and remembered in our most devout thanksgivings.

Blessed be God for pain, sickness, disappointment, distress; and every one of those various evils

evils with which the life of man is filled, and which are the ſubjects of our haſty complaints: Evils, which are our greateſt good; which afflict but purify, tear and harrow up the ſoul, but prepare it for the ſeeds of virtue.

Bleſſed be God that he is not ſo unkind as to try us by the moſt dangerous of all temptations, uninterrupted proſperity: That we are not undone by the accompliſhment of our wiſhes: That he is pleaſed to chaſtiſe us with his legitimate children, and with his dear and only begotten Son; Whom we hope to follow through the gate of the grave to a joyful reſurrection; and to be received by him into thoſe manſions which he is now preparing for us in heaven; where he liveth and reigneth, with the Father and Holy Spirit, one God, world without end.

SERMON VII.

1 THES. iv. 14.

For if we believe that Jeſus Died, and roſe again; even ſo them alſo which ſleep in Jeſus will God bring with him.

EVERY command of Almighty God our Creator has a right, no doubt, to our obedience; and every truth which comes down from the

'Father of lights,' demands our assent. Yet as our Lord directs us to distinguish between the 'weightier matters of the Law,' which are to be done first, and the other parts of it, which however, are *not to be left undone*; so have we ground to put a difference among articles of faith: there being some capital doctrines in religion, which require our belief more indispensably than others, and more amply reward our meditations.

Of these the principal are that Christ died for our sins, that he rose from the dead, and that he will come again to judgment.

In his *death*, he is set forth as 'a propitiation;' as he declares of himself, that he came 'to give 'his life a ransom for many.'

By his *resurrection*, he gave full proof of the truth of all his doctrines, and particularly of his future return to judgment; as it is written. God 'hath appointed a day, in which he will 'judge the world in righteousness, by that 'man whom he hath ordained; whereof he 'hath given assurance unto all men, in that he 'hath raised him from the dead.'

The *future judgment* is the completion of his office, in the final distribution of rewards and punishments; offering to our view, both that 'terror of the Lord' so efficacious in dissuading men from sin; and those 'exceeding great and 'precious promises, by which we are made 'partakers of the divine nature; *for* we know 'that when he shall appear, we shall be like 'him; for we shall see him as he is.'

'If

'If we believe that Jesus died, and rose 'again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus 'will God bring with him.'

But both the high rank of these articles in a Christian's faith, and their connexion with each other, are shewn together by St. Paul in the 15th Chapter of his first Epistle to the Corinthians; where he ushers them in with much solemnity, and dignifies them with the name of the *Gospel*; as if all he had written before, through so many pages, had been, in comparison, no part of it. 'Moreover, brethren, I de-'clare unto you the Gospel which I preached 'unto you, which also ye have received, and 'wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, 'if ye keep in memory what I preached unto 'you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I 'delivered unto you first of all, that which I 'also received, how that Christ died for our 'sins according to the Scriptures: and that he 'was buried, and that he rose again the third 'day according to the Scriptures.' The gospel which I preach I had from Christ. The first thing he taught me was this, That he died for the sins of men; and the second, that, being buried, he rose again. 'Now if Christ rose 'from the dead, how say some among you that 'there is no resurrection of the dead? Then is 'our preaching vain, and your faith is also 'vain.' Our religion is worth nothing without these parts of it. 'If in this life only we have 'hope in Christ, we are of all men most misé-'rable.'

So

So that the great Proof of a future judgment, is the declaration of Scripture: the teſtimony of our Lord, who is himſelf the Judge, and by the many wonders of his life, and his glorious reſurrection from the dead, hath given the moſt ample demonſtration, that he is able to fulfil his promiſes, and execute his threatenings; and that 'when the Son of man ſhall come in his 'glory, and all the holy angels with him, then 'ſhall he ſit upon the throne of his glory, and 'all nations ſhall be gathered before him.'

This proof from *Scripture* has the advantage of being at the ſame time univerſally intelligible, and deciſive; level to the capacity of the loweſt among the vulgar, and ſatisfactory to the moſt ſcrupulous in the School of philoſophy.

But there are alſo other arguments, ſuggeſted by the voice of *Reaſon*, in number not few, and in weight, taken all together, very conſiderable; tending, each according to its ſtrength, to raiſe in us the thoughts, or hopes, or expectation of another life, and a judgment to come.

The *univerſality* of this perſuaſion, may be urged here with the ſame propriety as it is alleged in proof of the being of God; and, if the perſuaſion be equally general, with the ſame force. For ſo univerſal a concurrence in the ſentiments of mankind muſt either be owing to ſome original revelation, or elſe muſt ariſe from the ſuggeſtions of nature, and the plain principles of reaſon. The ſeeds of this belief muſt have been mixed with the very mould of which we were made, ſince they are ſo apt to ſhoot up in every breaſt.

But

But beſides this ſecondary kind of argument, which we draw from the concurrent ſentiments of mankind; thoſe very ſuggeſtions of nature or principles of reaſon which have been ſufficient to prevail with others, will themſelves alſo deſerve *our* attention.

The human ſoul, being endowed with the powers of perception and will, ſo remote from all the known qualities of matter, or even inconſiſtent with them, appears to be immaterial; and by conſequence, not being capable of diviſion or diſſolution of parts, muſt be naturally immortal.

So much, at leaſt, is evident; that That which thinks in man, of whatever it conſiſts, does not neceſſarily ceaſe to be, whenever it ceaſes to act, or when its operations ceaſe to be viſible. Of which the ſuſpenſion of thinking during ſleep, if there be a ſuſpenſion, is a proof. It is certain, however, that ſome perſons have returned to life, and to the perfect conſciouſneſs of their own identity, after a ceſſation for hours, and even days, of all the diſcernible tokens of thought or action.

But there are conſiderations of a moral kind which lead towards the ſame concluſion. We are conſcious to ourſelves of good and ill deſert, in the practice of virtue and the commiſſion of vice. We know it is fit and proper that rewards and puniſhments ſhould be diſtributed to ſuch creatures as men, according to their behaviour. We are all ſenſible in our hearts that this is right; and may deny, but cannot doubt it.

Experience

Experience alſo aſſures us that this is done, to a conſiderable degree, in the ſtate in which we are placed at preſent. We in fact live under a moral government, by the conſtitution of things, that is, by the appointment of God. He is therefore a moral governor over us, rewarding virtue; and puniſhing vice.

This character of the Supreme Being recommends him to our approbation. We believe him to be true, and good, and juſt; and honour him the more for being ſo.

Still this moral government of God, in the preſent ſtate, is not perfect; being obſtructed by various impediments, which yet do not appear to have been deſigned by him, in the ſame manner as the cauſes are deſigned which promote that moral government. Notwithſtanding all the tendency of virtue to happineſs, there have been good men, good at leaſt in compariſon of others, to appearance unhappy; and bad men whoſe vicious practice has not yet rendered them miſerable. Will the Almighty permit ſuch a defect to remain in his works? ſuch inequalities to go unrectified for ever?

Or may we not rather hope, that this life is not the whole of man? But there will come after it another ſtate, in which the diſtinction between the good and bad will be made more conſpicuous and complete; and even a peculiar regard be had to the want of this diſtinction in the preſent life, ſo far as it has been wanting?

This is a ſhort abſtract of the argument for a future ſtate, and juſt judgment to come, as it appears

appears by the light of nature: 'a light ſhining 'but in a dark place, till the day dawned, *and* 'the ſun of righteouſneſs aroſe.'

But if unhappily all our arguments be ineffectual, if ſtill there be found ſome minds too dull to diſcern, or too diſputatious to admit their validity; we have yet in reſerve one method by which every perſon, let his capacity or turn of mind be what it will, may bring himſelf infallibly to the full belief of this great article of our religion: and it is this, let him be a *good man.* Let him do what he knows in his conſcience to be his duty, whether any one will ever bring him to account for the diſcharge of it, or not: Let him learn not to fear the inſpection of a heavenly eye: Let him be juſt ſuch a perſon as he ought to be, if it were certain he ſhould be called to judgment; and we may be bold to pronounce that his ſcruples will ſoon vaniſh. 'If any man will do *God's* will, he 'ſhall know of the doctrine whether it be of 'God.' This method will help him wonderfully to ſee the force of arguments; and make him 'wiſer than the aged becauſe he keeps the 'commandments.' It will do more towards the confirmation of his belief than the moſt perſevering ſtudy of philoſophy, or even of the Holy Scriptures: and it will, beſides, do that for him which belief cannot do: it will ſave him. It will exceed the knowledge of myſteries, or gift of tongues, or power of working miracles. It will place him before the preſence of his Judge 'with exceeding joy;' and through the mercy

mercy of Almighty God, the grace of his Spirit, and the mediation of his Son, secure to him the possession of that bliss which others indeed of greater ingenuity or eloquence, might prove with more exactness, or preach with more power; but which the good alone have the wisdom to obtain.

SERMON VIII.

ROM. xv. 13.

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in Hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.

IT is not only true, that there is a God who made us; it is a truth to which we are bound to give assent.

Is it not a duty to be grateful? God hath given us all we have; and should we not thank him for it? He 'teacheth us more than the 'beasts of the earth:' and will he not require that we know more? He speaks to us loudly in all his works: are we at liberty not to hear? 'When he made a decree for the rain, and a 'way for the lightening of the thunder; unto 'man

'man he ſaid, Behold the fear of the Lord, 'that is wiſdom:' and can we be innocent when we do not fear him? On this ſubject, inattention is vice; and ignorance depravity. As it is written, 'They have taught their tongue 'to ſpeak lies: through deceit they refuſe to 'know me, ſaith the Lord.'

This belief of the Being of God is alſo moſt highly favourable to the cauſe of virtue, or even abſolutely neceſſary to it: and atheiſm ſtrengthens every temptation to what is evil. Naked we ſtand, and open to 'all the fiery 'darts of the wicked one,' having caſt away 'the ſhield of faith,' and put off 'the whole 'armour of God.'

Secondly, Let us now ſuppoſe that, as we were originally created by Almighty God, ſo we have been redeemed by his Son: That we had fallen from a ſtate of happineſs by the ſin of our firſt parents; and were become liable for our own offences alſo to further degrees of our Maker's diſpleaſure, and to everlaſting condemnation: That this Divine Perſon interpoſed in our behalf, took upon him our nature, and in a human body bore the puniſhment due to our offences; thus putting it into our power to be reſtored to God's favour, and again made partakers of bliſs eternal.

Is not this inſtance ſimilar to the preceding? may not faith be as much a duty in the one caſe, as in the other? according to the words of our Lord, 'Ye believe in God; believe al-'ſo in me.'

It

It is of no importance in this queſtion *which way* the knowledge is conveyed, but whether it be in *fact* conveyed to us. The voice of God in his *works* is, in ten thouſand inſtances continually, unheard; and as often, when it is heard, diſregarded. But we are much to blame for our negligence, and more for our obſtinacy. It is the ſame with his *word* addreſſed to us in the Holy Scriptures; provided it be loud enough to be heard if we attend, and plain enough to be underſtood if we be docile. In ſhort, from a willing mind, and a good diſpoſition his commands will meet with regard in both caſes; from men of other principles, in neither.

The benefit which the Chriſtian Revelation propoſes to us certainly deſerves a ſerious thought. This is the leaſt reſpect we can pay, to an offer of everlaſting life. We know that we are ſinners, as ſurely as we know that we were born; and if ſinners, liable to God's wrath. When we are told therefore that we may be reconciled to our Maker, and reſtored to his love and favour for ever; is it not worth while to conſider whether this be true, and how it may be done? Inquiry then is plainly our duty; in a matter of ſuch importance, *ſerious* inquiry; in one where ſo many prejudices are concerned, *impartial*. If then ſerious and impartial inquiry will produce conviction, conviction is a duty; and unbelief a ſin.

And as it was obſerved of the belief of a God, ſo this faith in Chriſt is not only right in itſelf, but alſo highly beneficial to the believer. The Chriſtian religion is a ſchool of virtue.

The redemption of men by the Son of God, with the doctrine of a future judgment to be executed by that Divine Perſon, who came down from heaven to be crucified, in order that he might deliver us from death eternal, is the ſtrongeſt argument that was ever urged, or that can be conceived to make men good. It has an efficacy proper to work upon every diſpoſition; to reſtrain the raſh, to recover the fallen, to confirm the wavering, to ſoften the obdurate, to awe the preſumptuous, to encourage and animate the deſponding and weak, and to improve and exalt the virtuous and good of every degree to perfection.

But, Thirdly, there is alſo ſtill another Perſon, of Divine Nature; another, and yet united with the Son and Father, in a manner intimate beyond all other union, and inconceivable by mortal men; whoſe concurrence is equally neceſſary to our ſalvation, ſince 'no 'man can ſay that Jeſus is the Lord, but by 'the Holy Ghoſt;' to whom all Chriſtians are dedicated in baptiſm; 'Go ye therefore, and 'teach all nations, baptizing them in the name 'of the Father, and of the Son, and of the 'Holy Ghoſt;' in whoſe name Chriſtians are ſolemnly bleſſed, 'The grace of our Lord Je-'ſus Chriſt, and the love of God, and the

'communion

'communion of the Holy Ghoſt be with you 'all;' who is ſo united with the Supreme Father, as the Spirit of a man is with himſelf, for 'what man knoweth the things of a man, 'ſave the ſpirit of man which is in him? even 'ſo the things of God knoweth no one, but 'the Spirit of God;' who by dwelling in Chriſtians, makes them the temple of God, 'Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, 'and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? 'Ye are builded together for an habitation of 'God through the Spirit;' by whom all good perſons are 'led, comforted, ſanctified, *and* 'ſealed unto the day of redemption;' and by whom together with the Father and the Son the whole body of the church is upheld and governed, for 'there are diverſities of gifts, 'but the ſame Spirit; there are differences of 'adminiſtrations, but the ſame Lord; diverſi-'ties of operations, but it is the ſame God; 'which worketh all in all.' Now if it be thus diſcovered to us, that there exiſts beſides, and yet together with the Son and Father, a third Divine Perſon, to whom we are indebted for ſo many, and ſuch bleſſings; can we be any longer at liberty whether we will acknowledge him or no?

The manner in which we receive intimation of theſe benefits alſo is not material; whether by divine revelation, or by experience, reaſon, or human teſtimony. For the obligation ariſes from the importance of the benefits, and the degree, not the kind of evidence we have of

them. It is our part to attend with reverence, and inquire with diligence, and decide with fairneſs: and if ſuch an examination would end in aſſent; aſſent is our duty; diſobedience is impiety; and unbelief a crime exactly like that of atheiſm.

As it is thus a neceſſary duty to believe in the Holy Ghoſt, ſo this faith alſo will be of great advantage to us; and, together with our belief in the Father and Son; contribute powerfully to the ſatisfaction of our minds, and to our advancement in all goodneſs.

That there is often difficulty in acting rightly, is plain matter of experience. If you cannot admit that man wants any degree of *uprightneſs* which he ever poſſeſſed; he wants at leaſt that which, if he had it, would be a great bleſſing to him. Paſſions and appetites ſeduce him often from his intereſt; his intereſt itſelf ſometimes from his duty.

The natural diſpoſition is different, no doubt, in different perſons: but in no perſon does it appear to be accommodated to the practice of virtue in the manner that is abſolutely the beſt. An improper education, and the corrupt ſtate of the world into which we are born, have perverted us ſtill further, even very early. But we who are grown up, have alſo, all of us, diſordered our own appetites, affections, paſſions, by irregular gratifications, and broken the balance of our internal conſtitution, by imprudent indulgences. Where is the perſon who can ſay, he has not betrayed

ed the authority of Conſcience, that Vicegerent of God within; but on the contrary has ſupported it in the pre-eminence to which it is juſtly intituled, and by an uniform obedience rendered it's power as abſolute, as it's right is unqueſtionable?

In this ſtate therefore of difficulty in the diſcharge of what we feel to be our duty, and know to be our happineſs; muſt not any offer of help be embraced with alacrity, any hopes of it cheriſhed with joy, and every probable direction to obtain it, received with gratitude, and purſued with earneſtneſs?

'If ye being evil know how to give good 'gifts unto your children: how much more 'ſhall your Heavenly Father give the Holy 'Spirit to them that aſk him?'

'We wreſtle not, *not only*, againſt fleſh and 'blood, but againſt principalities, againſt pow-'ers,' thoſe infernal Beings who have uſurped ſo large a ſhare in the dominion of this wicked and deluded world. And our defence is proportioned to the danger: but, 'like the 'ſervant of the man of God,' we are blind to our own ſtrength. 'Behold an hoſt compaſ-'ſed the city both with horſes and chariots; 'and he ſaid, Alas! my maſter, how ſhall we 'do? And he anſwered, Fear not: for they 'that be with us, are more than they that be 'with them. And the Lord opened the eyes 'of the young man, and he ſaw: and behold 'the mountain was full of horſes, and cha-'riots of fire round about Eliſha.'

The

The preſence of Almighty God every where, has always been urged, and juſtly, as a powerful argument to withhold men from the commiſſion of ſin. But the object is brought ſtill nearer to the eye, and acquires a prodigious magnitude from this article of a Chriſtian's faith, That the Divine Spirit, one Perſon of the moſt ſacred Trinity, inhabits within him? and that his 'body is the Temple of the Holy Ghoſt.'

He pretends not to underſtand the divine goodneſs, any more than to deſerve it. One thing he knows, that it becomes him, ſo much the more, to 'be holy in all manner of 'converſation and godlineſs. He that hath 'this hope, purifieth himſelf, even as he is 'pure.'

He reflects that he is now 'a debtor, not 'to the fleſh, to live after the fleſh: for if ye 'live after the fleſh, ye ſhall die: but if ye 'through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of 'the body, ye ſhall live;' that every ſin is offenſive to his heavenly gueſt; and every habit of it incompatible with his preſence: that the pollutions of the world, and the deceits of it, are alike repugnant to the Spirit of truth and purity: they profane the temple of God, and drive out the Divinity from within him.

Bleſſed Lord! who may ſtand in thy ſight? We tremble to reflect on thy tranſcendant goodneſs: and contemplate our own happineſs with terrour.

'Depart

'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O 'Lord.' Or rather, come, and purify, and prepare an habitation for thyself. Burn up every inordinate affection, kindle every holy desire with the 'brightness of thy presence.' Thyself make us such, that thou mayest delight to dwell within us; and that we may be one with thee, our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, for ever.

SERMON IX.

1 JOHN iii. 24.

And he that keepeth his commandments, dwelleth in him, and he in him; and hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

THE Scriptures in many places speak of the Holy Spirit as abiding in believers.—'But ye 'are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit; if so be 'that the Spirit of God dwell in you; now if 'any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is 'none of his. I will pray the Father, and he 'shall give you another Comforter, that he may 'abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of 'truth; he dwelleth with you, and shall be in 'you. Know ye not that ye are the temple of 'God; and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in 'you?—

'you?—All the building fitly framed together 'groweth unto an holy Temple in the Lord; in 'whom you alſo are builded together for an ha- 'bitation of God through the Spirit.—Except 'a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he 'cannot enter into the kingdom of God.—As 'many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are 'the ſons of God.' Sanctification is repreſented not as being exactly the ſame thing with the inhabitation of God's Spirit, but the *effect* of it; as being his work.—'Such were ſome of 'you: but ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified, '—in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the 'Spirit of our God.—Elect according to the 'foreknowledge of God the Father, through 'Sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience.'

Neither is it probable that the preſence of the Holy Ghoſt thus ſpoken of, is to be underſtood of any favour peculiar to the firſt ages of the goſpel, or confined to ſome few among the number of good Chriſtians. The phraſes now recited bear the face of a more extended ſignification, and ſeem to promiſe a general bleſſing.

Yet many ſerious perſons pretend to no experience of this: and that experience which has been alleged in ſeveral ages, and particularly in our own, ſeems to be attended with diſficulties: the proofs not altogether unexceptionable; the circumſtances ſometimes ſuſpicious: to the creating of doubt and uneaſineſs in believers; and to the ſcorn of infidels.

But ſurely we need not be reminded that Chriſtians may have the aſſiſtance of the Spirit of

of God, without the power of working miracles. The very readineſs to receive the Goſpel, even in the firſt age of it, is aſcribed to his operation; 'no man can ſay that Jeſus is the 'Lord, but by the Holy Ghoſt.—A great door, 'ſays St. *Paul*, and effectual was opened unto 'me.—*It is written of Lydia*, whoſe heart the 'Lord opened, that ſhe attended unto the 'things which were ſpoken.'

Often indeed the preſence of the Divine Spirit was in thoſe days viſible in miraculous works: which is not ſo now. Nor is this altogether unaccountable.

The Father of all diſpenſes his bleſſings to his children with a kind of ſparing liberality; never beſtowing leſs than is neceſſary; ſeldom much more than is ſufficient. In the beginning of the Goſpel-age, when the world was to be converted to a faith, that oppoſed the reigning prejudices and intereſts of mankind; the preachers were furniſhed with proportionable abilities, and the 'demonſtration of the Spirit, '*was that* of power.' But as ſoon as Chriſtianity by theſe ſupernatural means was ſpread abroad in the world, and men were diſpoſed to receive the Goſpel with leſs averſion: the powers which were no longer neceſſary were no longer given. By degrees they became more rare and leſs diſtinguiſhable; till at laſt they vaniſhed from the earth. Men may therefore now believe in Jeſus, and yet not be able to *take up ſerpents*, or *drink deadly* poiſon without danger: you may meet with pious perſons, but none

none whoſe touch will heal the ſick; with many whoſe faith, we truſt, is not only *as a grain of muſtard ſeed*, but ſtrong and active, and yet if they *ſay to this mountain be thou removed and caſt into the ſea, it ſhall* not *obey them.*

Chriſtians alſo may have the Spirit of Chriſt, without being inſpired with the certain knowledge of all divine things, or with ſkill infallible in the interpretation of Scripture. Ignorance, doubt, and error, may reſide in the ſame breaſt with the fountain of all truth and light: becauſe he pours not out the ſtreams of his bounty without meaſure; but 'divideth to every man 'ſeverally as he will.'

The Spirit was promiſed to the Apoſtles to *teach* them *all things*, and *bring to their remembrance whatſoever* the Saviour *had ſaid unto* them. And they laboured in the ſervice of the Goſpel as they were enabled and commanded. They communicated the will of God to the world; they committed it to writing for future ages; and they ſealed it with their blood.

But yet, though the ſubſtance of our duty is evident, and the heads of the divine laws written in large characters; there are ſtill many queſtions, and to appearance conſiderable, which can receive no probable anſwer without the utmoſt uſe of induſtry, and the help of learning, and with both no certain deciſion.

However the divine revelation might be imparted to the primitive teachers; their ſucceſſors have it to learn by ſlow and uncertain methods. But the ſame Being who made the world, redeemed

deemed it: and can we wonder to find a reſemblance in his operations? Our firſt parent never paſſed through the ſtate of infancy, but came into the world a man. The lot of his poſterity is different. We are weak and helpleſs in our beginning of life; and aſcend by tedious and tottering ſteps to our limited degree of ſtrength and of underſtanding.

The great Apoſtle might boaſt, 'The Goſpel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man; neither was I taught it but by the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt. When it pleaſed God who ſeparated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; I conferred not with fleſh and blood.' From being 'a blaſphemer and a perſecutor and injurious,' he became at once not a whit inferior 'to the very chiefeſt Apoſtles.'

But we are not to meaſure our expectations by theſe great examples. It is enough that our Lord hath aſſuredly promiſed, 'To be with us alway even unto the end of the world:' and to procure for us 'another Comforter that he may abide with us for ever.'

On this promiſe, and this Comforter, we ſtill rely for ſuch help as is ſtill needful, though not ſuch as we might vainly wiſh: acknowledging at the ſame time that we are as ignorant as we are feeble, both beſet with danger, and encompaſſed with doubts. Whoever thinks that good Chriſtians ſhould be exempted from error, may demand

demand alſo that they ſhould be delivered from pain; be freed from the debility of childhood, the folly of youth, the decays of age; be created compleat in every power, and ſtart up at once to the perfection of happineſs.

May we not add, That good men may be led by the Spirit of God, and yet they themſelves not diſtinguiſh his holy influence? and be conducted ſafely in the way to heaven, without diſcerning the very hand that guides them? How is this incredible?

You believe, all of you, the Providence of God. It is a doctrine even of natural religion. Can you diſtinguiſh between the acts of God, and the courſe of Nature? What is it that God doth? He doth all. No doubt. He ruleth in heaven above, and in the earth beneath. But he is inviſible to your eyes: nor can you certainly ſeparate, in the tranſactions that lie before you, human weakneſs from omnipotent power; or draw the preciſe line in any one event, which you now ſee, between God and Nature.

He is ever doing good, and almoſt ever in a manner that exceeds alike our deſerts and our underſtanding. His heavenly hand, like the hidden ſpring in a machine, works unſeen, yet powerfully; is little in appearance, but in effect wonderful. He delivers from dangers we never feared, beſtows a thouſand benefits we knew not that we wanted. 'Not a ſparrow is 'forgotten before God: the very hairs of your 'head are all numbered.' In the mean time the

the original cauſe of all is undiſcerned, perhaps alas! unthought of. He is 'about my 'path, and about my bed.—*And yet*, Behold I 'go forward, but he is not there, and back-'ward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left 'hand, where he doth work, but I cannot be-'hold him: he hideth himſelf on the right 'hand that I cannot ſee him.'

'So is the kingdom of God, as if a man 'ſhould caſt ſeed into the ground; and ſhould 'ſleep and riſe night and day;' and the ſeed ſhould ſpring and grow up he knoweth not how: 'for the earth bringeth forth fruit of 'herſelf, firſt the blade, then the ear, after that 'the full corn in the ear. And when the fruit 'is brought forth, immediately he putteth in 'the ſickle becauſe the harveſt is come.'—The ſeed is the word of God; the heart of man is the ground into which it is caſt: if this be good, doubt not the care of God; he will cauſe it to 'ſpring and grow up, though we know not 'how.' His Spirit 'which helpeth our infir-'mities,' will ſhed on it the *ſweet influences* of heaven, ſupport and cheriſh our tender goodneſs, defend it from the inſects of the earth, and the ſtorms above: the fruit is a life of piety and faith, good works and charity, purity and patience: when this is brought forth, the ſickle is in the hand of the Angel of death, and the harveſt is immortal glory.

It is certainly both allowable and proper to conſider the moſt ſpeculative points, which have any relation to religion; but our attention ſhould

ſhould be much more employed on practical ſubjects; and moſt of all on *practice*. If we would obey God's commandments more, we ſhould, all of us, queſtion his promiſes leſs; perhaps underſtand them better; certainly be more largely partakers of them.

There are, and will always be, innumerable things in the divine government impoſſible for us to comprehend. And as thoſe which are more known to us require our thanks and praiſe; ſo the former call for other ſentiments and diſpoſitions of mind equally reaſonable, admiration, ſubmiſſion, truſt: and all conſpire to demand the conformity of our lives to the will of God. In caſes which we underſtand, we ſee there is great reaſon for this; and in thoſe we do not, there may be greater.

When we read of the miracles done by the Apoſtles, and find that in ancient times the blind received their ſight, the deaf heard, the lepers were cleanſed, the lame walked, and the very dead were raiſed at the ſpeaking of a word; we are amazed at the powers beſtowed on the firſt preachers of the Goſpel, and ſhould be willing to ſubmit to any degrees of rigour in our lives, that ourſelves alſo, if it were now poſſible, might be honoured with the ſame ſignal endowments. Though we are not ſo wickedly fooliſh as to think, that the gifts of God can be purchaſed with money; whatever could procure them we ſhould be forward to offer, crying out, with that falſe convert, 'Give 'me alſo this power.'

'He

'He that keepeth his commandments dwell-
'eth in him, and he in him.' Be as good men as the firſt preachers of Chriſtianity, keep but with equal care the commandments of God, and the ſame Spirit will be, *is* already, in you which was alſo in them. You cannot work miracles; but you are as dear to your Heavenly Father, as thoſe whom he enabled to raiſe the dead.

Nay more; men may work miracles in ſupport of God's true religion, and yet be found at laſt, to have been the ſervants of another maſter; and the preacher of righteouſneſs be condemned for his ſins. 'Many will ſay to me in
'that day, Lord, Lord, have we not propheſied
'in thy name, and in thy name have caſt out
'devils, and in thy name done many wonder-
'ful works? then will I profeſs unto them, I
'never knew you; depart from me ye that
'work iniquity. In this rejoice not that the
'Spirits are ſubject unto you; but rather re-
'joice that your names are written in heaven.
'To obey is better than ſacrifice:' a good life is above miracles.

There will be found among the workers of wonders, among Apoſtles, Prophets, Martyrs, who ſhall be 'cut off, and caſt into outer dark-
'neſs.' But of thoſe who love God, and keep his commandments, not one ſhall be loſt. The obedient ſhall all be received into the ſtate of bliſs, and be made 'kings and prieſts to God,
'for ever and ever.'

SER-

SERMON X.

JUDE v. 3.

That ye ſhould earneſtly contend for the Faith which was once delivered to the Saints.

WHEN the Apoſtles were 'filled with the 'Holy Ghoſt, and began to ſpeak with other 'tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance;' the miracle, according to the notion of ſome writers, was wrought upon the audience. Though they that ſpake were *Galileans*, and ſpake too, as theſe perſons ſuppoſe, the language only of their own country; they were 'heard *by* every man in his own tongue in 'which he was born.'

However that may be, in whatever words the newly inſpired Apoſtles might utter the wonderful works of God, on the day of Pentecoſt; the doctrine and duties of the Chriſtian covenant, which they have left behind them in writing, are, now at leaſt, in one language; and the whole New Teſtament has been thus delivered down through many ages, and diſperſed into every nation of the world. And yet, alas! ſuch is the power of education, cuſtom, intereſt, and other cauſes, that we have deduced a great variety of very different opinions and ſyſtems of faith from one common written word. Every Church, and Sect has a ſenſe of it's

it's own, which it learns to affix to the language of Scripture. And though 'they that 'ſpeak *to us* be all Galileans,' though there be among them no diverſity of ſpeech or diſagreement of doctrine; Prejudice, it ſeems, has been able to work ſomething like that firſt great wonder upon us: we 'hear them every man 'in his own tongue in which he was born.'

The opinions which we thus owe to prepoſſeſſion, we ſupport and patroniſe with a temper as different from that earneſtneſs enjoined by the Apoſtle, as are the tenets, poſſibly, for which we contend, from 'the faith which was 'once delivered to the Saints.'

This Spirit ſteals upon us ſometimes almoſt inſenſibly, and we are in the midſt, or at the head of a faction, before we ourſelves are aware of it. We know not on either ſide, what we are doing, but we perceive the diſtance widens, and charity and union are become impracticable. We caſt the blame always on our adverſaries; and impute to them the diviſion that is ſo detrimental to us both. We obſerve not the motion of our own veſſel; but the ſhore flies from us.

Sometimes we enter into theſe factious conteſts out of a regard, as we fancy, to Religion and Truth. The cloak of zeal is thrown over; and it covers even from our own eyes, often indeed from them only, avarice, ambition, vanity, or reſentment.

When we are moved therefore to take upon us the execution of theſe orders of the Apoſtle

St. Jude, and are going out in our armour in this cauſe of Faith; there are a few cautions we may do well to take along with us.

The firſt is this, That we be ſure it is indeed the very 'Faith which was once delivered to 'the Saints;' no innovation introduced in later days by the authority or artifice of men. That we erect not on the baſis of caprice or intereſt, a towering ſyſtem of opinions; and call this, 'The temple of the Lord; The pillar and 'ground of the Truth.'

In the next place, it would be adviſable that our zeal ſhould abate, as the articles of our belief are multiplied. Deductions in Divinity are dangerous. We ſhall do well to keep the 'Form of ſound words;' but may be more moderate in our concern for very ingenious explications of them. 'Be rooted and built up 'in Chriſt, and ſtabliſhed in the faith as ye 'have been taught: but beware leſt any man 'ſpoil you through Philoſophy and vain de-'ceit, after the tradition of men, after the ru-'diments of the world.'

But muſt not follies be checked as they riſe? Can new errors be oppoſed without new terms? Suppoſe a perſon aſſents to the *words* of the Goſpel, but contradicts the whole meaning of it: he allows, for inſtance, the Reſurrection; but explains it into allegory, or teaches that it is 'paſt already.'—I grant it: He 'overthrows 'the faith—A man that is an heretic after the 'firſt and ſecond admonition, reject.' Yet, remember, that Reſerve is the companion of Wiſdom,

Wiſdom, and the Guardian of Authority.

'If any man ſeem to be contentious; we 'have no ſuch cuſtom, neither the churches of 'God.' Let us refute the erroneous, and repreſs the arrogant, by the clear teſtimony of Scripture, and by the practice of the firſt churches: not enlarging our chriſtian creed into an univerſal body of all philoſophy, not deciding in it all things that ever have been diſputed, not corrupting it with great ſwelling words of vanity, nor framing continually our Faith anew in conformity to thoſe ſyſtems of 'Sci-'ence, falſly ſo called,' which ſpring up and decay in every age; and are ſucceeded by others, as highly celebrated, and as ſoon forgotten.

Our ſhallow ſhort-lived ſophiſtry is but ill ſuited to that 'word of God which liveth and 'abideth for ever.' Being in their nature repugnant, they cannot be thoroughly united. Like the iron and the clay in the feet of Nebuchadnezzar's Image, they are materials that will not incorporate. Preſerve the ſacred truths of religion, and deliver them down to the lateſt ages, unviolated. They need no ornaments of our's, they will receive none. They are defiled by decorations. 'Thou ſhalt build the al-'tar of the Lord thy God of *whole* ſtones; 'thou ſhalt not build it of hewn ſtone: for if 'thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou haſt pollu-'ted it.'

Nor is every thing which is contained in the Scripture itſelf, for this reaſon eſſential to reli-

gion. In this great ſtorehouſe of divine truths *there are* not only 'veſſels of gold and ſilver, 'but of wood and ſtone; ſome to honour, and 'ſome, *I do not ſay*, to diſhonour,' but of a rank leſs diſtinguiſhed. It may be truth, and a Scripture truth, for which we contend; and yet our zeal may be not well placed. The poſſeſſion muſt be very valuable which is not dearly purchaſed at the expence of peace. *Truth* is indeed of an awful preſence, and muſt never be affronted with the rudeneſs of direct oppoſition; yet will ſhe conſent for a moment to paſs unregarded, while your reſpects are offered to her Siſter *Charity*.

If it be the obſcure, the minute, the ceremonial part of religion for which we are contending; though the triumph be empty, the diſpute is dangerous. Like the men of Ai, we purſue perhaps ſome little party that flies before us, and are eager that not a ſtraggler may eſcape; but when we look behind, our city is in flames.

On the other hand, but for the ſame reaſons, as we ſhould not be forward, and urgent in impoſing the profeſſion of ſuch articles, or the uſe of ſuch ceremonies, as are not, or are not plainly eſſential to religion; ſo if unreaſonable men will lay them upon us, we will do all we can to content them. We will refuſe no burden for the ſake of peace. We will prefer the proſperity of the church of Chriſt before the ſatisfaction of our deſires, or the honour of victory. Or rather, we will eſteem it yet a greater pleaſure

pleaſure and triumph, to bend to the infirmities of the weak, and yield up our own inclination and judgment, to the prejudices, or the paſſions, or even the perverſeneſs of our fellow Chriſtians.

It is a poor argument that is ſo often brought by the diſturbers of order; That we are obliged to bear our *teſtimony*, as their phraſe is, againſt encroachments. We do it beſt, by differing as far as poſſible from the ſpirit of thoſe who make them; by not following their bad example; nor accepting their challenge to quarrel about little matters; by ſhewing that we value peace more than they do.

An honeſt man, much more a Chriſtian, may not indeed profeſs any thing contrary to his belief, or practiſe any thing againſt his conſcience; but he may join in communion with ſuch as do; and the pretence or the hope of better edification, will not always counterbalance the apparent miſchiefs of ſeparation and ſchiſm.

Zeal not only for faith and opinion, but even for *holineſs*, if it break out beyond the reſtraints of Prudence and Charity, changes it's name and nature, and becomes as much more dangerous, and culpable than indifference, as the beſt things when corrupted are worſe than others. At leaſt, if it be ſtill a zeal for God, yet not being 'according to knowledge,' as the Scripture ſpeaks, being miſtaken in it's meaſures, without diſcretion itſelf, and unwilling to ſubmit to the guidance of any other; the effect and conſequence

ſequence may be as bad, as if the cauſe were more criminal: and after ſome interval of time, and the regular progreſs from Enthuſiaſm to Hypocriſy; the end and iſſue alas! may be no other than the propagation of that very unbelief and wickedneſs which at firſt we intended to root up.

God indeed is not tied to the rules of human prudence; but is able to bring light out of darkneſs, and make his own ſtrength moſt conſpicuous in the weakneſs of his inſtruments. But, ſetting aſide his miraculous interpoſition, which is not haſtily to be relied on, or to be alleged in our days ſurely without ſtrange preſumption, as the learned only can be ſuppoſed to inſtruct, ſo none but the magiſtrate muſt be allowed to govern. And this regular ſubordination muſt take place in the Chriſtian, as well as every other community, if we are truly deſirous of it's proſperity and continuance.

Severe he might be, and rigorous, but he was a wiſe commander, and a true lover of his country, who put his own ſon to death, for fighting in oppoſition to his orders; though he brought back with him in his hand the head of an enemy.

But beſide the danger and miſchief; theſe looſe diſorderly efforts of ſelf-willed and ſeparate adventurers, however more violent and obſervable, yet in effect and force are not to be compared to the impreſſions of a compact, well governed, and obedient body; like the Grecian phalanx,

phalanx, as it is deſcribed by the Poet*, ſtill and ſteady; ſilent, but yet reſolute; ardent without clamour; and active without confuſion.

A good man chooſes indeed to err rather on the ſide of charity; or elſe, we are too favourable in our conceſſions, when we allow that thoſe perſons who thus break looſe from the reins and order of government, are actuated always by pious views, and a well meaning enthuſiaſm. We know, at leaſt, the time has been, when under a conduct not unlike to theirs, and the ſame profeſſions, have been concealed the moſt malignant and dangerous deſigns. The demure hypocrite, with all his cant, has been at laſt detected: notwithſtanding his furious preaching of a ſublimer piety, and a yet more thorough reformation, his venom has been diſcovered; and the Sectary, touched with Ithuriel's ſpear, ſtarts up into a Jeſuit.

That church, whoſe earneſtneſs indeed in this contention can never be denied, has yet, we think, in other reſpects been highly culpable; and may ſerve, in concluſion, for an example of the violation of all the rules and cautions now expreſſed or inſinuated. A ſyſtem of faith too large and voluminous, in ſome parts injurious to religion and virtue, in many not true, in others not certain, or not important, they yet maintain, impoſe, and propagate, with a violence and tyranny which no faith or truths whatever are ſufficient to juſtify, and by arts

* —— σιγῇ μένεα πνείοντες Αχαιοὶ,
Εν θυμῷ μεμαῶτες ἀλέξεμεν ἀλλήλοισιν.

arts which are condemned by all the principles of morality.

There is one way, however, by which we are always at liberty, both Laity and Clergy, to plead for our own principles, and recommend that ſyſtem of faith, and form of worſhip which we embrace, whatever it be, to the acceptance of mankind: a way which is likely to be the moſt effectual of any, and is liable to none of thoſe objections which are with ſo much reaſon alleged againſt many other methods of making proſelytes. It is ſuch a method of converting others, as will be ſure at leaſt to have a good effect upon ourſelves; and will neither expoſe us to the cenſure of obſtinacy and ſchiſm on the one hand, nor of injuſtice and perſecution on the other. In ſhort it is the practice of virtue; the conſcientious diſcharge of thoſe duties, and the cultivation of thoſe graces, which are enjoined by the univerſal and acknowledged principles of morality, and recommended by every profeſſion of religion. Reverence, reſignation, gratitude to the Supreme Being; reſpect and tenderneſs as well as juſtice and fidelity to mankind; moderation, ſelf-government, ſobriety; theſe things will probably recommend our belief to men, ourſelves moſt certainly through the mediation of Chriſt, to the mercy of our Maker. 'Tis thus we may beſt 'adorn the doctrine of God our 'Saviour,' widen the pales of his church, and ſtrengthen his dominion. In this way we may all be preachers of righteouſneſs, a nation of prieſts.

There

There is no danger, in our days, in the profeſſion of religion; and the diſhonour is yet perhaps on the ſide of infidelity. So much the more let us bend our endeavours to practice; the only point that has in it any difficulty, or much diſtinction. Let us preſerve the profeſſion of a pure faith, in charity; have zeal without fierceneſs; and meekneſs without fear; 'ſpeaking the truth in love, *and adding* to our 'faith virtue, *be not* unfruitful in the know-'ledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.'

To whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be glory and majeſty, dominion and power, now and for ever.

SERMON XI.

LUKE v. 20.

Man, thy ſins are forgiven thee.

'WHO can forgive ſins but God alone?' ſaid the Jews in wonder to each other, when they ſaw the Saviour of the world, who had ſo often cured their bodily diſeaſes, undertaking to remove the ſeverer maladies of the mind, and 'to heal the broken hearted.'

It

It is true, God is both Lawgiver, and Judge: 'who art thou that judgeſt another 'man's ſervant? to his own maſter he ſtandeth 'or falleth.' The Conſcience of every man, accuſing or acquitting him as he behaves, is God's voice within. It delivers the dictates of that Reaſon which he hath imparted, the ſuggeſtions of thoſe principles he hath implanted; in his name, and with his authority. When we act contrary to it's directions, we know that we do wrong, that we violate the law of him who made us, and deſerve a puniſhment which no power on earth can remit. Kings and Magiſtrates, who diſpenſe juſtice or mercy to all others, according to their own pleaſure, are yet themſelves ſubject to the control of this inward monitor; and while the Priſoner reaſons 'of righteouſneſs, temperance, and 'judgement to come,' the guilty Judge 'trem-'bles.'

Whatever be the nature of our crimes, whether they be violations of temperance, juſtice, or humanity; they are all offences againſt God. 'Deliver me from blood-guiltineſs, O 'God.' It was murder this penitent ſinner had committed; yet he cries, 'againſt thee, thee 'only have I ſinned, and done this evil in thy 'ſight.'

Yet was our Lord guilty of no blaſphemy, when either to the poor paralytick, who was let down into his preſence through the roof, or to that contrite woman, who waſhed his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs

hairs of her head, he vouchſafed to pronounce thoſe comfortable words, 'Thy ſins are for-'given. The Son of Man had power upon 'earth to forgive ſins.' He was inveſted with his Father's authority, was himſelf God, as well as Man; the Maker and Governor of the world. 'All things were made by him; 'and without him was not any thing made, 'that was made.' When he came into the world, he came 'unto his own, *though* his 'own received him not.'

Nay, his Apoſtles, authoriſed by his commiſſion, guided by his Spirit, and girt with his power, they too, while here on earth, could 'forgive ſins. As my Father hath ſent me, 'even ſo ſend I you. And when he had ſaid 'this, he breathed on them, and ſaith unto 'them, Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt. Whoſe 'ſoever ſins ye remit, they are remitted unto 'them; and whoſe ſoever ſins ye retain, they 'are retained.'

The authority thus received they exerciſed often in acts of mercy; giving health to the ſick, feet to the lame, and, like their Lord, looſing from their infirmities thoſe whom Satan had bound for many years: ſometimes in acts of judgment; 'How is it that ye have 'agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the 'Lord? Behold the feet of them which have 'buried thy huſband are at the door, and ſhall 'carry thee out. Then fell ſhe down ſtraight-'way at his feet, and yielded up the Ghoſt.'

'Paul

'Paul filled with the Holy Ghoſt, ſet his 'eyes on him, and ſaid, O full of all ſubtilty 'and all miſchief, thou child of the devil, thou 'enemy of all righteouſneſs, wilt thou not 'ceaſe to pervert the right ways of the Lord? 'the hand of the Lord is upon thee.—And 'there fell on him a miſt and darkneſs, and he 'went about ſeeking ſome to lead him by the 'hand.

That which remains of this authority in the Church, if it may be called by the ſame name, being ſtripped of it's miraculous power to diſcern the innocent from the guilty, to inflict judgments from heaven, or to deliver from them, muſt be content to exert itſelf within much narrower limits. It is the power which belongs to every ſociety, and to the Chriſtian, as well as others, of excluding the unworthy, and receiving back the penitent. And this branch of his authority the Apoſtle Paul himſelf was willing to execute in conjunction with his own diſciples. 'Sufficient 'to ſuch a man is this puniſhment which was 'inflicted of many. Wherefore I beſeech you 'that ye would confirm your love towards him. 'To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive 'alſo.'

The miniſters of Chriſt now can only declare to you the terms on which God will forgive ſin, and theſe they muſt deliver as they find them in the Goſpel.

The light of nature ſuggeſts no certain way of obtaining the forgiveneſs of ſin. The offender

fender may be ſorry for his paſt miſconduct, and amend his life; but this is not to be innocent, but *penitent*.

Did we not receive all our ability to do well from God's bounty? If then we had employed it in all things according to his will, where had been our merit, or his obligations? Having not exceeded the ſtrict demands of juſtice, we might truly ſtyle ourſelves 'unprofitable ſervants, *who had* done that which was our duty 'to do;' and nothing more. We had only 'not offended: and therefore could aſſume to ourſelves but this part of praiſe; to be free from cenſure; and lay claim to no greater reward, than that of eſcaping puniſhment.

But alas! we muſt relinquiſh even this pretenſion; and be obliged to own, that of all the gifts of God to man, there is none more ſuitable to a ſinner than Forgiveneſs.

And God will forgive; he is diſpoſed, and hath promiſed to do ſo. Some experience of his mercy we have at preſent. It is he who ſupplies our wants; and does he not alſo bear with our offences? How often doth he ſpare when we deſerve puniſhment? how often in wrath remember mercy?

In the revelations which he hath been pleaſed to make to mankind, Almighty God hath publiſhed the charter of his mercy more explicitly. Even to the Jews he proclaimed his own title, 'The Lord, the Lord God, merci'ful, and gracious, long-ſuffering, and abun'dant in goodneſs and truth.'

But

But it is the Chriſtian religion which exhibits the moſt ample diſplay of the divine mercy, whether we conſider the extent of it, or the manner of diſpenſing it. 'Go ye into all 'the world, and preach the goſpel to every 'creature; he that believeth and is baptized 'ſhall be ſaved. By him all that believe are 'juſtified from all things, from which ye could 'not be juſtified by the Law of Moſes.'

But the method in which this great mercy is conveyed, recommends it beyond any other even of the divine benefactions; and is indeed aſtoniſhing. We thank God for our creation, preſervation, and ſupport. We do well. They are benefits we have not deſerved, and can never repay. But theſe bleſſings, however important to us, are yet, if you will overlook both the freedom of the language, and the meanneſs of it, no *expence* to him. To make a world, to God is no more than to utter his command. 'He ſpake, and it was done: let 'there be light; and there was light.'

To recover men, when fallen by their own diſobedience into a ſtate of ſin and miſery, this appears to have been a taſk of a very different nature, more difficult to be accompliſhed, and requiring, I had almoſt ſaid, all the efforts of omnipotence.

For conſider in what terms it is repreſented to us. 'So God loved the world, that he gave 'his only begotton Son. He hath made us ac-'cepted in the beloved, in whom we have re-'demption through his blood. He ſpared not 'his

'his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.' And the Son himself was willing to be thus given for us. 'I lay down my life for the 'Sheep: No man taketh it from me; but I 'lay it down of myself. Greater love hath 'no man than this, that a man lay down his 'life for his friends. Christ hath loved us, 'and hath given himself for us, an offering 'and a sacrifice to God.'

Some allowance we might expect, for the many infirmities of our nature, and the perpetual and imminent danger of our situation, from a God of equity and goodness, himself the author of our being, the maker and governor of the world: but to what number or degree of transgressions his mercy might extend; or what measure of woe we might be required to exhaust, before the cup of his wrath would be turned away from us, could be determined by no deductions of human reason. He offers us the forgiveness of every sin; and lays the weight of punishment upon the head of his Son.

Yet extensive as this offer is, however wonderful this love, in one respect they are limited. There are yet conditions to be performed on our part, to make us proper objects of this abundant grace: and after all the overflowings of the divine goodness, without *faith* and *repentance*, we cannot be partakers of it. It is true, 'So God loved the world, that he gave 'his only begotten Son; *but why?* to the end 'that all that *believe* in him should not perish.

'*Our*

'*Our Lord did ſay*, Greater love hath no man 'than this, that a man lay down his life for 'his friends; *but how?* ye are my friends, 'if ye *do* whatſoever I command you. *What 'was the Goſpel that St. Paul preached?* 'I kept back nothing that was profitable unto 'you; but have ſhewed you, and have taught 'you publickly, and from houſe to houſe; 'teſtifying both to the Jews, and alſo to the 'Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith 'toward our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.'

Receive therefore the tender of mercy with humble gratitude: be ſenſible that you want it, and thankfully comply with the conditions God hath been pleaſed to annex to it. Neither doubt his goodneſs, nor diſpute his authority. Believe what he teaches, obey what he commands. If he has provided an atonement for you, it is becauſe you wanted it, and you may be ſure he is ready to accept it. 'Kiſs the ſon leſt he be angry, and ſo ye periſh 'from the right way, if his wrath be kindled, 'yea, but a little.'

You will not, even under the goſpel, perform an unſinning obedience, or arrive at abſolute perfection; but you will aſpire after it, and draw nearer towards it, making continual advances in piety and goodneſs. You will ſuffer no ſin to have dominion over you, no graces or virtues to be ſtrangers to you.

You have not beheld the 'glory of the only 'begotten of the Father, full of grace and 'truth,' performing miracles of mercy for the

the ſalvation of mankind, and cannot therefore be guilty of aſcribing thoſe wonders of divine love, of which yourſelves have been witneſſes, to the powers of darkneſs. But, to exhort you in the Apoſtle's words, 'Take heed, 'brethren, leſt there be in any of you an evil 'heart of unbelief, in departing from the living 'God, and leſt any of you be hardened through 'the deceitfulneſs of ſin. If we ſin wilfully, 'after that we have received the knowledge of 'the truth, there remaineth no more ſacrifice 'for ſins; but a certain fearful looking for of 'judgment, and fiery indignation.'

Alas! the very grace of God itſelf, and the offer of mercy through his Son, may prove pernicious to us; and turn, if we will have it ſo, to our greater condemnation. Forgiveneſs repulſed will return in vengeance: the blood of Chriſt, if it be trampled under our feet, will ſpeak but the ſame things with *that of Abel*, and the voice of it cry out againſt us. Not only the judgments of God are to be feared; his very mercies are awful, and every bleſſing has an edge with which it can wound. 'It 'had been better not to have known the way 'of righteouſneſs, than after they have known 'it, to turn from the holy commandment de-'livered unto them.—Behold thou art made 'whole, ſin no more, leſt a worſe thing come 'unto thee.'

SERMON XII.

1 COR. xv. 35.

But some Man will say, how are the dead raised up? and with what Body do they come?

PHILOSOPHERS and the vulgar, Pagans and Christians, have distinguished between the Soul and Body of Man. By the light of nature alone, men have been enabled to look through the dark earthly tabernacle with which the human mind is encompassed; and discern the spiritual inhabitant within. Who does not see that such life and activity, such an extent and vigour of imagination, such clearness and penetration of reason, and such earnest aspirations after virtue and immortality can never be the genuine properties of that heavy clod which cleaves so close to the earth, and sinks into it so soon: and that these gross corporeal organs are but slaves in the service, or rather instruments in the hand of a much nobler Being?

This distinction is also clearly taught in Scripture. 'Fear not them that kill the body, 'but are not able to kill the soul; but rather 'fear him which is able to destroy both soul 'and body in hell.' The body of our Lord himself was not raised out of the grave till the third day; yet when one of the two malefactors who suffered with him, as he was hanging upon

upon the croſs, 'ſaid unto Jeſus, Lord, remember me when thou comeſt into thy kingdom. 'Jeſus ſaid unto him, Verily I ſay unto thee, 'to day ſhalt thou be with me in paradiſe.'

Now ſome powers of the human mind or ſoul ſeem to be exerted with leſs dependance on the body than others; the intercourſe between theſe two partners being either not uniform, or not always alike obſervable. The ſtrength of the underſtanding is by no means proportioned to that of the limbs. A perſon of very weak intellects may be happy in a robuſt and vigorous habit of body; and on the other hand, the higheſt mental endowments, the brighteſt wit, the richeſt fancy, the ſoundeſt judgment, now and then make what amends they can for an infirm and ſickly conſtitution.

Conſiderable members of the body may be taken away, the greateſt part of it by gradual decay be loſt, or even the whole by degrees changed, without any apparent alteration in the power of the mind. Men have ſhewn as much clearneſs of apprehenſion, and ſenſibility of heart, in their laſt moments, as in any part of their lives. And tracing the ſoul in it's paſſage to the very confines of the other world, ſometimes we can diſcern no diminution in it's capacity or feeling: but it ſeems to go into the unknown ſtate with it's paſſions in their full ſtrength, and every faculty in perfection.

Yet at other times, and in many inſtances, on the contrary, the Mind appears to exert itſelf with leſs freedom; and gives ſigns of a cloſer

ſer connection with her earthly companion. She ſeems to ſympathiſe with the body in every the leaſt diſorder and infirmity; taſting no pleaſure by reaſon of the other's complaints, and drooping under weakneſſes not her own. The very uſe of her reaſon is interrupted and loſt; ſhe becomes melancholy or diſtracted by the leaſt violence done to the minute parts of the corporeal ſyſtem; by the vapour of a plant; by the touch of an inſect; by the diſcompoſure, it may be, of ſome portion of our frame even too ſmall for human diſcernment.

So wonderful is the union between the ſoul and body of man; ſo important, and yet incomprehenſible: in it's hidden nature utterly beyond all our reach; and even in the external appearances, various, irregular, and contradictory.

Even *ſleep* itſelf, however the matter of continually repeated and univerſal experience, is found to be a ſubject that baffles all our philoſophy. Inſomuch that ſome ſpeculative men have not been able to ſatisfy themſelves on this head, without recourſe to what is little leſs than miraculous; aſcribing the perceptions in our repoſe to the nocturnal viſits, and illuſive operations of ſpiritual Beings unſeen and innumerable.

Bleſſed Lord! How little do we know of thy works! Of thoſe parts of them with which we are moſt converſant! How blindly do we conjecture; how vainly err! Well may we be ignorant of thy infinite Eſſence; ſince our own frame

frame eſcapes our knowledge, and we are ſtrangers even to ourſelves. Overſpread with ſuch darkneſs, we look to the revelation of thy word, and rejoice in that heavenly light; reſigning ourſelves entirely to thee; our head and heart; our conduct to thy command, our underſtanding to thy illumination. We are wholly thine, both body and ſoul; in the hands of thy mercy, Father, in every ſtage of our exiſtence; while we dwell firſt in this houſe of clay; next when we ſhall enter, as we ſhall quickly, unclothed into the world of ſpirits; and laſtly when the two parts of us, after a long, perhaps, and unknown ſtate of ſeparation, ſhall be finally reunited never to be divided more.

Still, Curioſity will be prying into myſteries: 'Some man will ſay, How are the dead raiſed 'up? and with what body do they come? 'Thou fool:' fool; not for wanting ability to anſwer theſe queſtions, but for being weak enough to propoſe them. 'That which thou 'ſoweſt is not quickened except it die.' Grain thrown into the ground cannot ſpring up again without loſing it's preſent form and contexture. By diſſolution only muſt it be quickened into a new and more abundant life, yielding 'ſome 'thirty, ſome ſixty, and ſome an hundred fold.'

'With what body do they come?' It is in his power who made all things, to aſſign to each what body he will: yet, you ſee, 'he gives to 'every ſeed it's own.' A grain of wheat doth not ſpring up into barley. 'If God ſo clothe 'the graſs of the field, ſhall he not much more

'clothe

'clothe you, O ye of little faith?' Truſt him; at leaſt, where you can do nothing for yourſelves; or if you could, would do harm. You, it is likely, would be for preſerving 'the life 'which you now live in the fleſh,' and keeping the bodies of which you are already in poſſeſſion. Death, whenever it comes, is generally an unwelcome gueſt; admitted, becauſe he will not be put back. And yet this death, or a change equivalent to it, is the only means, now at leaſt, ſince the fall, by which our dying bodies can be advanced to their due perfection, and be made partakers, with the ſoul, of immortal life.

We find all kinds of animals fitted for the ſtation they are placed in, and the duration intended for them. Fiſh, fowl, beaſts, inſects, have all bodies with organs accommodated to their ſeveral degrees of perception and action. The caſe is the ſame, we ſee, with man, in the preſent world: and if it is revealed that we ſhall have bodies alſo in the world to come; we may be ſure, it is becauſe we ſhall want them; and that they will be ſuch as we ſhall want. 'Fleſh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom 'of God.' Is it a wonder that this feeble, periſhable frame, ſhould be found unfit for an incorruptible and eternal ſtate? an earthly fabrick for the heavenly city?

'There are alſo celeſtial bodies, and bodies 'terreſtrial.' Some animals on earth, not to ſay all, at a certain period paſs forward into a ſtate extremely different from that which was

firſt

firſt aſſigned them. But the frame of their body is altered to ſuit with the intended removal; and it now as much requires the *air*, ſuppoſe, or the *water*, as before it was averſe from it. They cannot ſubſiſt at all but in the very *element*, which, a very ſhort time before, would have deſtroyed them in a moment. The human frame itſelf, among the reſt, undergoes one ſuch change even here: How is it incredible then, that when man ſhall be removed into yet another world, he ſhall want, and ſhall be ſupplied with a celeſtial body, as different from the earthly, as the place of it's reſidence, or the nature of it's occupations?

Our Saviour indeed ſpeaks of the reſurrection, as a perſon might be expected to do concerning a future ſtate in general. His Apoſtle Paul does the ſame, in ſome parts even of this very Chapter where he takes ſo much pains to eſtabliſh the doctrine of the reſurrection, and to ſilence objections againſt it. The great point, no doubt, in which we are concerned, is, whether death will be the end of us; or whether we ſhall live after it: and if we ſhall, whether our future condition may be affected by any thing which it is now in our power to do. If it be ſufficiently made known that we ſhall thus live after death; 'whether in the body, or out 'of the body,' it might ſuffice that 'God 'knoweth.' However he hath been pleaſed to reveal to us, in ſome degree, even this point alſo. Not only our natural hopes of a future life are confirmed; we are alſo taught that we

ſhall

ſhall be again clothed with bodies ſuitable to that heavenly ſtate; and that we ſhall die no more.

Happy for us, if any principle or doctrine, of natural or revealed religion, any expectation, or any reaſon whatever, have influence enough to induce us to live well, the little time we do live here on earth: if regard to our preſent or future welfare, if the fear or the love of God, if reverence to our ſouls, created after his image, and by their birth immortal, or reſpect to our very bodies, which ſhall be made ſo, or any other argument, prevail with us to do that which is right, well pleaſing to our Maker, and approved by our own conſcience, and to 'eſcape the corruption that is in the world.'

God made us; both ſoul and body; 'therefore glorify him both in your body, and in 'your ſpirit, which are God's.' But he not only made, he preſerves us alſo; 'he holdeth 'our ſoul in life;' he ſuſtains our corporeal frame; he feeds, and clothes, and protects us. All our care can add nothing to our ſtature, and little to the length of our days: but 'he 'will be our guide *both* unto death,' and beyond it; and ſuffer no part of us to periſh. Our ſouls are in his hand; 'the hairs of our 'head are numbered by him.' The life which he has given, or rather one infinitely more glorious both in ſoul and body, if we will accept of it, he promiſes to reſtore, and to continue for ever.

'Lord,

'Lord, what is man that thou art mindful 'of him; or the ſon of man that thou *thus* vi- 'ſiteſt him? What thanks, what ſervice ſhall we pay thee for thy unbounded goodneſs? This poor periſhable life, if we give it wholly to thee, is a ſmall return for thy mercies, and is already thine. In that future ſtate, which thou art pleaſed to promiſe, let us continue to be employed in the performance of thy commands. All thy bleſſings, even 'the light of thy coun- 'tenance' in heaven itſelf, will leave our happineſs imperfect, if we are not permitted to tender to thee ſome tribute of our thankful hearts, and gratify the ardour of our affection.

Thy mercies are innumerable and infinite, and our obedience and praiſes, though they add nothing to thine honour, will yet, we truſt, for our ſake, be ſuffered to approach thee to all eternity. Compleat all thy kindneſs in admitting our little ſervice; and fill up the whole meaſure of our bliſs, by receiving from us a drop into the ocean of thy Felicity and Glory.

SER-

SERMON XIII.

MATTH. xxv. 46.

And these shall go away into everlasting Punishment, but the righteous into Life eternal.

WHEN the Lord formed man upon the earth, and 'breathed into his nostrils the 'breath of life, *he created him*, to be immortal, 'and made him to be an image of his own 'eternity.'

From this happy immortality, Man, by his transgression, fell into a state of misery, and death. 'For God made not death; but un-'godly men by their works, and words, called 'it to them. *Or rather*, By one man sin en-'tered into the world, and death by sin: and 'so death passed upon all men: and reigned 'even over them that had not sinned after the 'similitude of Adam's transgression.'

If our first parents, upon their disobedience, had been punished with immediate death, they had suffered only what they too justly deserved: and their posterity had, in that case, been nothing; no matter of dispute, no objects of injustice or of favour; but classed among the innumerable tribe of possibilities, without Being.

However, Almighty God was pleased, in the overflowings of his goodness, to suspend that sentence of death which he had pronounced, till

till a race of men were born into the world, ſuch as could proceed from ſuch parents, fallen from their uprightneſs, and driven out from the happineſs of Paradiſe, and from the tree of Life, into a ſtate full of trouble and temptation, of diſeaſes, and death.

Can we help reflecting here, as we paſs along, on the deſtructive nature of ſin, how ruinous in it's effects both to ourſelves and all around us: how bitter even when tempered with mercy; and dreadful, though diſarmed of half it's terrors.

Still further; it pleaſed the Supreme Father, in the depth of his unſearchable wiſdom and love, to provide for us a deliverer from the power of this death which 'paſſeth upon all men;' and by the death and reſurrection of his dear Son, to open once again to us the gates of life, and reſtore us to that immortality both in body and ſoul, for which he had created us. 'Come, 'ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the king-'dom prepared for you from the foundation of 'the world. As in Adam all die, even ſo in 'Chriſt ſhall all be made alive. The trumpet 'ſhall ſound, and the dead ſhall be raiſed in-'corruptible. Neither can they die any more: 'for they are equal unto the angels; and are 'the children of God, being the children of the 'reſurrection.'

Good men, under every diſpenſation of religion, conſidering how full of trouble the world is, and to how great a degree the comforts and bleſſings of it are diſperſed promiſcuouſly, have

have encouraged themſelves with the hopes of a future recompenſe, and the proſpect of a 'better country, that is an heavenly.' The Chriſtian religion, you ſee, both confirms theſe expectations, and enlarges them; aſſuring us that all good perſons ſhall be made glorious and happy, both in body and ſoul, with God to all eternity.

This article of our faith, in the firſt place, is to be received with the moſt profound thankfulneſs to the great Author of our Being, who created us at firſt for happineſs, and perſeveres through a courſe of ſuch aſtoniſhing meaſures to bring us at laſt to the poſſeſſion of it. Who being exalted in his own nature to the height of bliſs and glory, could have no views towards himſelf in any thing he has done for us; and yet has created the earth for our accommodation, given his dearly beloved Son for our redemption, and prepared his own heaven for our happy habitation for ever. 'Lord, what 'is man that thou art mindful of him? and the 'Son of man that thou viſiteſt him? Thou 'madeſt him lower than the Angels, to crown 'him with glory and worſhip.'

Secondly, This doctrine of life everlaſting is the greateſt ſpur to obedience, and the practice of virtue, not only out of love and thankfulneſs to our divine benefactor, but out of regard to our own intereſt. The richer the reward the more it deſerves our aſſiduous and earneſt endeavours. Shall we not 'preſs toward the 'mark for the prize of the high calling of 'God

'God in Christ Jesus,' when we reflect that in value it exceeds all that 'eye hath seen, or ear 'heard, or that hath entered into the heart of 'man,' and hath besides this transcendent excellence, that, like the giver's mercy, it 'endureth for ever?' The possessions or distinctions of this vain world in their nature can never satisfy, and drop from us as fast as we obtain them, at the latest with this short life, and many of them much sooner: but the heavenly bliss continues unfading to eternity; and after the revolution of endless, endless ages, is but still beginning. How should we despise the empty pomp, the idle bustle, the little greatness of this poor transient state; were 'the eyes of 'our understanding, *by God's grace*, enlightened, to know what is the hope of his calling, 'and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance.' The wise merchant, having found this 'one pearl of great price,' sells all that he hath, and buys it; gladly sacrificing ease, pleasure, profit, whatever is most dear and valuable, and life itself, and esteeming all as nothing, when compared with an Eternity of Happiness: a recompence infinitely too great for any services of our's, were they ever so perfect; but not too great for God's bounty, and the merit of his dear Son. 'The gift of God is eternal 'life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.'

But while with so much delight and triumph we have 'respect unto the recompence of the 'reward;' we must suffer ourselves also to be reminded of 'the day of wrath, and revelation 'of

'of the righteous judgment of God.' Were religion made up of promiſes only, it would meet with a readier acceptance; but in reality would be much leſs agreeable to the dictates of unprejudiced reaſon, and the ſuggeſtions of human experience.

Guilt deſerves puniſhment. This we know, every one of us; and are certain of it, by our own conſciouſneſs. Difficulties indeed may be raiſed concerning the degree of puniſhment, the province of mercy, the efficacy of repentance; but the thing itſelf is unqueſtionable; and though we ſhould deny, we cannot doubt it.

If then the Juſtice of God will not permit him to let incorrigible wickedneſs paſs finally without puniſhment; what period may be put to it by this, or any other Attribute of his nature, by his univerſal Rectitude, his infinite Wiſdom, his boundleſs Goodneſs; muſt be far beyond the reach of our abilities to determine; or whether thoſe who have obſtinately refuſed all the offers of the divine mercy on earth, may not continue to be wicked, and to be miſerable for ever.

Our own experience, in this life, how vaſtly, beyond all proportion, the natural puniſhment of crimes can ſometimes exceed all the profit or pleaſure that was obtained by them, may give us the moſt awakening intimations of what is poſſible: and the declarations of Scripture have raiſed theſe apprehenſions into certainty, in a manner, I fear, equally deciſive and awful.

'It

'It is better for thee to enter into life maim-
'ed, than having two hands, to go into hell,
'into the fire that never ſhall be quenched:
'Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is
'not quenched. They ſhall drink of the wine
'of the wrath of God, which is poured out
'without mixture into the cup of his indigna-
'tion: they ſhall be tormented with fire and
'brimſtone, and the ſmoke of their torment aſ-
'cendeth up for ever and ever.'

'I was an hungred, and ye gave me no
'meat: I was thirſty, and ye gave me no drink.
'Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting
'fire, prepared for the devil, and his angels.'
We would gladly make a diſtinction between the eternity allotted to the happy, and that to which the wicked ſhall be condemned: but there appears no ground for it in holy Scripture. 'Theſe ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſh-
'ment; but the righteous into life eternal.' *Eternal* and *everlaſting* are but two different tranſlations of one and the ſame word in the original.

See, therefore, to apply the exhortation of Moſes in the ampleſt extent, 'in that I com-
'mand thee this day to love the Lord thy God,
'to walk in his ways, and to keep his com-
'mandments, and his ſtatutes, and his judg-
'ments; I have ſet before thee life and good,
'and death and evil. I call heaven and earth
'to record againſt you, that I have ſet before
'you life and death;' life; not that poor periſhing thing, here on earth called life, of

'threeſcore

'threescore years and ten,' which at best is full of trouble, and is brought 'to an end, as it 'were a tale that is told:' but a life of immortality and happiness; a life not terminated by death, nor invaded by debility and age; and a happiness, unallayed by pain or sorrow, and enduring for ever and ever: and *death*; not like that here below, which puts an end to all the sufferings of this mortal state, but rather a life of everlasting misery; not the extinction of a wicked and wretched existence, but a birth into a new Being of complete and never ending woe; of guilt imbittered by remorse without repentance; of envy at the sight of that celestial bliss possessed by the once unpitied poor, now separated from us by a gulf unpassable; of malice against the gracious Being, whose mercy waited for us so long, but is *now hid* for ever *from our eyes*; and of mad rage, the only passion to be gratified in hell, against the tempter and accomplices of our crimes, the companions now and partakers of our punishment, permitted by God's justice to satisfy their mutual resentment, and execute his just judgments on each other.

'The Angels which kept not their first es-'tate, but left their own habitation, he hath 'reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness 'unto the judgment of the great day.' They fell once, and fell for ever. To poor fallen man there is mercy offered, would he but accept it, unless Christ hath died in vain. 'For verily 'he took not on him the nature of Angels; 'but

'but he took on him the ſeed of Abraham.' The greater the mercy, the more terrible will be the vengeance. Let it not be in vain, that God waits yet with patience for your repentance, and offers you the atonement of his dear Son. Think not that he lies in wait to catch at your tranſgreſſions, and ſeize upon the firſt little ſlip you make, in the midſt of innumerable ſnares, to deliver you up to this eternal torment. Did he deſire your perdition, could he not deſtroy you in a moment? It is becauſe he wiſhes moſt truly for your happineſs, that he hath given his only Beloved, to become a man as you are, to prevail with you to amend your life; and to bear the puniſhment for you of all that you have hitherto done amiſs.

Let this ſuffice. Embrace the offer of life; fly from the wrath to come. You know not the plan of infinite government, what the order of God's Univerſe admits, what eternal wiſdom counſels, or ſupreme rectitude requires. Say not within yourſelves, 'If he deſires that 'I ſhould be happy he can make me ſo.' He can do every thing that is right and fit to be done; and nothing more. He deſires you to be happy, and 'tis therefore he does ſo much, and, for any thing you know, all he can do, to effect it. He is your Friend and your Father: but, in this reſpect like your parents upon earth, he can only lament over your calamities, if you reſiſt his goodneſs, and are reſolved to periſh in ſpite of all the efforts of omnipotence.

For your own ſake, and for the ſake of thoſe who love you, not only on earth, but above, the bleſſed angels, the Holy Trinity, return to yourſelf, to a ſound mind, to the exerciſe of piety, and the practice of all virtue: 'there is joy in heaven over one ſinner that 'repenteth.'

SERMON XIV.

2 TIM. ii. 19.

Let every one that nameth the Name of Chriſt, depart from Iniquity.

THERE is no perſon, of what perſuaſion ſoever in religion, but has cogent reaſons to diſſuade him from a vitious courſe of life, and engage him in the practice of virtue. Even 'the fool, that hath ſaid in his heart,' or with his lips, 'there is no God,' yet muſt own that there are at leaſt Rulers upon earth, who are 'not a terror to good works but to the evil, 'and *who* bear not *always* the ſword in vain;' that health attends on temperance, ſecurity on juſtice, honour on generoſity; and that great degrees

degrees of the oppoſite vices, as they are univerſally either contemptible or odious, ſo they are commonly full as detrimental to the guilty perſon, as to any of thoſe who are aggrieved by him.

To all theſe conſiderations, he who ſtyles himſelf a profeſſor of the religion of nature, will add further, that he hath a God to ſerve, and a ſoul, perhaps, to ſave.

The followers of the great Impoſtor in the Eaſt are tied down to rules of devotion, ſobriety, and abſtinence, in ſome reſpects very rigorous; with an aſſurance of ample amends hereafter in the enjoyment of all corporeal pleaſures in a terreſtrial paradiſe.

The expreſs promiſe of plenty, health, long life, and honour, with ſome obſcure intimations of better things to come, were the motives which it pleaſed the Divine Wiſdom to make uſe of in order to engage the obedience of the Jewiſh people: diſgrace and poverty, peſtilence, and death were threatened to deter them from Idolatry.

Now moſt of theſe arguments have, or had at the time when they were propoſed, their degree of efficacy; and many of them are univerſal, alike ſolid and ſatisfactory in all ages.

But yet, as the piety and charity required by the Chriſtian revelation are the moſt ſublime; ſo the arguments urged to enforce them are the moſt conſiderable, not a few peculiar to Chriſtianity, and ſome the moſt weighty

that can poſſibly be addreſſed to the mind of man.

In the firſt place, every Chriſtian is bound to the practice of every thing good and holy by his own promiſe and vow. The religion of Chriſt is ſo utterly incompatible with all kinds of vice, that no perſon can be admitted into it by baptiſm, without giving the moſt ſolemn aſſurances, before God and the Church, that he will renounce them all. This engagement, which was firſt made for us before we were ſenſible of it's importance, we have ſince, it muſt be ſuppoſed, ſuch of us as are arrived at the age of manhood, made our own: by a particular and formal act taking the baptiſmal vow upon our own ſouls, and binding our conſcience by the 'form of ſound words' pronounced over us at the 'laver of regenera-'tion.' At the Lord's table alſo, we preſent unto God 'ourſelves, our ſouls and bodies, to 'be a reaſonable, holy, and lively ſacrifice.' Nay, by barely joining with the congregation in the common Chriſtian worſhip, we ſhew to what religion we belong, and tacitly, or rather with our own lips we openly lay claim to the bleſſings, and acknowledge the obligations of Chriſtianity. Thus are the vows of God upon us all. No crime committed by a Chriſtian is *ſingle*. After ſuch ſolemn and repeated engagements to lead a holy life, he who ſtill commits ſin, multiplies the tranſgreſſion, and inflames every offence by the addition of unfaithfulneſs and perjury.

To

To these he adds also the vice of 'impious 'ingratitude;' not only, as every other wicked person in the world doth, against Almighty God our heavenly Father, but also against his only begotten Son our Lord. Nor is there a duty in the whole catalogue of virtues, which, besides it's own intrinsic excellence, and the authority of God stamped upon it, is not further and forcibly recommended to us, by the earnest intreaty of our Divine Redeemer. He, whose benefits, and whose love to us are beyond all example, and conception, requests this one thing of us, in return for all his goodness, that we do good; that we serve God; that we love one another. 'By this shall all 'men know that ye are my disciples, if ye 'have love one to another. Who is my mo-'ther, and who are my brethren? Whosoever 'shall do the will of my Father which is in hea-'ven, the same is my brother and sister and 'mother.' If we have gratitude, let us shew it by our works, as well as words; in our lives, as well as prayers; lest we incur that just reproof, 'why call ye me Lord, Lord, and 'do not the things which I say?'

But for our encouragement and direction in the exercise of all virtues, this Divine Person has been pleased also to set them before us both in his doctrine and in his own life. He went about teaching truth, and doing good; but 'he did no sin, neither was guile found in his 'mouth.' Whatever instances of piety, charity, humility, or self-denial he calls us to, he exhibits

exhibits them in his own perſon. He requires no duties which he did not diſcharge, forbids no pleaſures which he did not refuſe.

The virtues ſuitable to the condition of men were, many of them, not naturally adapted to his ſtate of divine greatneſs; and amidſt the luſtre of heavenly glory, his pattern, however perfect, would be inviſible to an eye of fleſh. But this difficulty he removes: he diveſts himſelf of this celeſtial glory; comes down into our world, aſſumes the human nature, not in appearance only, but in reality and truth, with all it's weakneſſes, wants, and paſſions, ſin only excepted.

Among the conditions alſo of human life, though none of them be free from troubles and trials, there is yet a wide difference; ſome being more honourable than others, and ſome more commodious: he choſe to himſelf the loweſt ſtation, and the ſharpeſt ſufferings. He did not come into the world to diſplay his dignity, and receive the homage of his creatures, or to taſte the gratifications of ſenſe: but to labour, and yet be in want; to miniſter to the neceſſities of others, without having where to lay his head; to heal the infirmities of men, and bear with their perverſeneſs; to be reviled for his heavenly doctrine, and purſued with menaces and ſtones for the 'many 'good works which he had ſhewed for his 'Father.'

And as it pleaſed that Supreme Father, in the depth of his unſearchable counſels, to receive

ceive fallen man to mercy only through the blood of his own Son; he willingly undertook even this part alſo. He gave his body up to violence, to be ſtripped, ſcourged, and nailed to the croſs: thus becoming in his own blood a ſacrifice, and atonement for others; and by his death reconciling a world of ſinners to his offended Father.

And is there in all this no motive to piety and virtue? Is it nothing that we have been thus beloved, inſtructed, encouraged, and redeemed? Can we ſee no reaſon in all that has been done for us, to do what we can, I would have ſaid, for him who hath done ſo much for us, but at leaſt for ourſelves? If gratitude and love touch us not; cannot ſelf-intereſt move us? Are we willing to give up ſo many benefits, purchaſed for us ſo dearly, and offered ſo freely to our acceptance? Can we conſent that Chriſt ſhould thus have loved us, and lived and died for us; and all in vain? Yet in vain, we know, it muſt be, unleſs we lead a holy and virtuous life. 'Little children, let 'no man deceive you: he that doeth righte-'ouſneſs is righteous: even as he is righteous: 'whoſoever ſinneth,' habitually and wilfully, 'hath not ſeen him nor known him.' In this the children of God are manifeſt, and the children of the Devil: 'whoſoever doeth not 'righteouſneſs, is not of God; neither he that 'loveth not his brother.'

When you are thus told of the mighty things that have been done for you, of the mercy of the

the Supreme Father, the love of his divine Son, and all the ſufferings he underwent on your account; you may perhaps reply, that you acknowledge all this to be true, and wiſh with all your heart that you could be duly ſenſible of it: you are ſorry that your minds are not more deeply impreſſed; and if you do not love your Creator and Redeemer as you ought, you can truly ſay, that you deſire to do it.

But do you conſider that there is a ſure rule to prove the ſincerity of theſe pretenſions of your's? 'Thou knoweſt the commandments, 'Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not 'ſteal, Do not bear falſe witneſs, Defraud not, 'Honour thy father and mother.' If you have ſuch a ſenſe of the 'love of God in Chriſt 'Jeſus' as makes you good men, as leads you to do whatever he requires, and keeps you from committing any thing that will offend him; the Goſpel has it's proper effect upon you. And notwithſtanding the coldneſs of your ſentiments, all is ſtill well, while you can alledge your obedience as the proof of the ſincerity of them.

But this obedience itſelf, in the preſent fallen condition of mankind, and corrupt ſtate of the world, as it is perfect in no perſon, ſo it is difficult, at leaſt in ſome inſtances, to all. Here therefore is another token of the tender care of our Redeemer, who procures us aſſiſtance from heaven; and leaving the earth himſelf, ſends down to us 'another Comforter, 'which is the Holy Ghoſt, *to* abide with us

'for

'for ever, *to* guide us into all needful truth, 'to help our infirmities, and to bear witneſs 'with our ſpirit that we are the children of 'God.' What a fund of encouragement is this for patience in troubles, and perſeverance in every virtue! You ſee how greatly a Chriſtian is the care of heaven. The moſt holy Trinity is repreſented as co-operating to the ſalvation of Believers. Be afraid of the ſin of not concurring humbly and earneſtly with ſuch a Helper. The Apoſtle's argument is not contradictory to itſelf, but as juſt as it is awful: 'It is 'God which worketh in you both to will, and 'to do; *therefore*, work out your own ſalvati-'on with fear and trembling.'

The obedience which you thus perform by God's help, will be rewarded by his bounty, as if it were all your own. It is a moſt eminent diſtinction of the Chriſtian Religion that by it, 'are given unto us exceeding great and 'precious promiſes:' we are aſſured not only of the protection of God's providence, and the aſſiſtance of his Spirit, but of the 'Inheritance 'incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth 'not away.' The reſurrection of our Lord hath given men an ocular demonſtration of a life after death: and he is gone into heaven, as he hath told us, 'to prepare a place *for his* '*diſciples*, that where he is, there they may be 'alſo. Neither can they die any more: for 'they are equal unto the Angels; and are the 'children of God, being the children of the re-'ſurrection.'

It remains only to be added, in the laſt place, that as the rewards propoſed in the Goſpel exceed all that we can aſk or think; ſo the puniſhment denounced againſt the impenitent is proportionably alarming. They ſhall be caſt both 'body and ſoul into hell, into outer 'darkneſs, where the worm dieth not, and 'the fire is not quenched. When the Son of 'man ſhall come in his glory, and all the holy 'Angels with him; then ſhall he ſit upon the 'throne of his glory, and before him ſhall be 'gathered all nations: and he ſhall ſeparate 'them as a ſhepherd divideth the ſheep from 'the goats: and he ſhall ſet the ſheep on his 'right hand, but the goats on the left: and 'theſe ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſh-'ment; but the righteous into life eternal.'

As a wicked Chriſtian is more inexcuſable than thoſe who ſin with leſs knowledge of their duty, and leſs experience of the Divine goodneſs; ſo will his puniſhment be more ſevere. Mercy is indeed the moſt amiable attribute of the Almighty. 'He doth not af-'flict willingly, nor grieve the children of 'men.' But there is a time when mercy, even the Divine mercy, abuſed, is turned to vengeance.

The goodneſs, and love, even of God himſelf, become to the incorrigible and obſtinate, only the foundation of fear and danger. Every bleſſing he hath beſtowed, or offered, the regeneration of baptiſm, the communion of the body and blood of Chriſt, the love of God, the

the gift of his dear Son, the miſſion of his holy Spirit, and the everlaſting habitations prepared in heaven, if we refuſe to hear, now when they call us to amendment, hereafter will 'riſe up againſt us, and condemn us.'

A Chriſtian ſtands not on the ſame level with other men. As his virtues ought to be more eminent: what he does amiſs, is more criminal. God hath provided for him the higheſt manſions in the kingdom of glory, and is deſirous to place him neareſt to himſelf in heaven; but if he reſiſt the means of grace, and reject the offer of ſalvation, his puniſhment will be as terrible as his hopes were glorious.

Thus then the Chriſtian's Creed is a 'doc-'trine according to godlineſs;' all the capital articles of it enforcing moſt ſtrongly a virtuous and godly life. We have all the great reaſons to be good men, which are common to others, and more, and greater, over and above. Let us not ſuffer them to be loſt upon us. Let the piety and virtue of our lives be anſwerable to theſe accumulated obligations: and if our own ſolemn engagements; if the precepts, or doctrine, or love of Chriſt; if the example of his life, the propitiation of his death, the ſanctification of his Spirit; if the offer of everlaſting happineſs, or the terror of eternal miſery, be arguments of any weight; then, however others live, 'let every one that nameth the 'name of Chriſt, depart from iniquity!'

SERMONS

ON THE

TEN COMMANDMENTS.

SERMON I.

First Commandment.

EXOD. xx. 3.

Thou ſhalt have no other Gods before me.

THAT the heavens and *all the hoſt of them*, in which we obſerve ſo much magnificence and order; the earth, air, and ſea, with their various and innumerable inhabitants, in which we ſee and experience ſo much uſe and beauty, are the workmanſhip of ſome ſuperior power, and the contrivance of a wiſdom exceeding infinitely that of poor mortal man; has been readily allowed by almoſt all perſons in every nation and age. Trifling diſputes may have been raiſed, and the appearance of oppoſition kept up; but to little effect, except the confirmation of the truth. For the doctrines of Prieſts, the opinions of Philoſophers, the traditions of the Vulgar, unite in the ſupport of each other; and all agree to eſtabliſh this great article of our faith, That the world was made by a Divine Hand; that there is a God.

But then, that 'there is none other but he;' that all things were made, and are governed by one alone, this is a point which has not been acknowledged ſo univerſally. The Unity of God

God has been unknown to the common people for many ages, in almoſt all nations: and the learned are but debating at this day, whether it can yet be proved by the light of nature.

But, ſuppoſe we ſhould want a *demonſtration*, that there is but one God; we plainly have no grounds on which to build ſo much as a conjecture, that there are more.

In the frame of nature we diſcern the marks not only of deſign, but of uniformity; we ſee a connection between the parts, extending as far as we are able to carry our obſervations: which is an intimation to us that the *Univerſe* is *One Whole*.

This Whole indeed is too vaſt for our underſtanding to graſp; and the parts are tied together often by links too fine for our diſtinct inſpection. Can Man comprehend the curious proportions, nice adjuſtments, the intricate and endleſs co-operations of every atom of worlds unnumbered through the immenſity of Space? Yet even Man is not furniſhed with ſuch dull organs, but that from his ſtation in the midſt of this awful dome of nature, where all things, great and ſmall, inanimate and living reſound the glory of the Creator, he is able to hear ſome portion of the univerſal harmony that ſurrounds him.

But there is *diſcord* alſo among the works of God; ſome evil, as well as much good. Every thing does not appear to contribute to this general agreement; and if the happineſs which we find in the world require us to acknowledge, that

that there is a God of wiſdom and goodneſs; there is miſery enough in it to be imputed to ſome other Author.

Yes; to *ourſelves*, very much of it; and to our own voluntary choice. We will not receive the good that is offered us: we refuſe to comply with the intentions of our Maker, and to act the part allotted us: we abuſe the bleſſings of heaven, and then murmur againſt the Author of them; 'The fooliſhneſs of man perverteth his way; and his heart fretteth 'againſt the Lord.'

Sometimes *others* act thus perverſely, and we alſo ſuffer, in various degrees, for their faults. Still our calamities flow from that *Free agency* which was imparted to us for our good, and upon the whole contributes to it; and which would loſe it's uſe, and it's very nature, were the effects of it to be obſtructed.

Or we ſuffer by *general laws*, an interruption of which would be more hurtful than the evils we complain of.

Or our ſufferings ariſe unavoidably out of our *happineſs*, or they are neceſſary in order to produce it. Pain, amongſt men, is the offſpring, or the parent of all pleaſure. It is evidently ſo in inſtances exceeding all number, and probably where we cannot trace the relation.

Or, laſtly, the evils which we ſuffer are ſuch as the Author of the world *meant* to lay upon us; they are agreeable, if not to our wiſhes, to the plan of his providence; and tend, as much

perhaps as other things more eligible in our eyes, to the great ends of his Creation.

Thus, as the voice of nature ſpeaks moſt plainly the exiſtence of one God, it ſuggeſts nothing to us concerning more: and the rules of ſound Philoſophy forbid us to multiply cauſes without neceſſity, or ſo much as the ſhadow of a reaſon.

But Philoſophy, in the *Heathen world*, even in the moſt learned times, enlightened but a few perſons: and thoſe few thought themſelves at liberty to equivocate with the vulgar, and diſſemble their faith. If in their hearts they believed in one God, they *worſhipped* more; and offered their ſacrifices upon as many altars as the reſt of their countrymen.

The religion of the *Jews* did indeed expreſsly teach, and earneſtly inculcate the Unity of God: yet was it ſo far from expelling the evil of Polytheiſm out of other nations, that it was not able to keep off the contagion from their own. While that people were maſters of their own land, they were ſeldom content but with the Gods of their neighbours: ſo long as they continued free from the dominion of foreigners, they were ever ready to make room for their Deities. And nothing could effectually cure them of Idolatry, but a long ſervitude to Idolaters.

But, 'what the Law could not do,' to borrow the Apoſtle's words on another occaſion, 'in that it was weak, God ſending his own 'Son' hath eminently accompliſhed. Henceforth,

forth, 'to us there is but one God, the Father, 'of whom are all things, and we in him; and 'one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, 'and we by him.'

But even we, enlightened, as we are, by the Gospel, must be content with what is delivered; and not, prompted by curiosity, or by vanity, presume to be wise 'above that which is 'written.' We are to 'hold fast the form of 'sound words;' without departing from it on either side, by explaining it into what is not meant, or into nothing; neither confining what is left general, nor denying what we can not comprehend; lest thus 'professing our-'selves to be wise, we become fools.'

The ideas of *Unity*, and *Identity*, in the abstract, are clear; applied to a *Man*, or to the meanest *Insect*, they immediately become liable to a thousand difficulties, which hardly any two Philosophers clear up alike. And can we but be overwhelmed and lost in the 'breadth and 'length and depth and height,' the glory and humiliation, the union with the Father, and with Man, of that *Word*, who 'was in the 'beginning, was with God, and was God, and 'was made Flesh, and dwelt, *and died* among 'us!'

This then is one thing we may do well to learn from the contemplation of the subject before us; and the less we comprehend of the subject, the more clearly we may deduce this inference; That it becomes us to be humble in our opinion of our own accomplishments; but

eſpecially of our knowledge, and above all, of our knowledge of God: never to dictate, nor yet be forward to contradict. It is wrong, no doubt, to be ignorant and dogmatical: but where is our merit in being obſtinate, when we are no wiſer? How often in theſe altercations have both parties been the champions of Error? how long diſputed without meaning; But ſuch, alas! is our frowardneſs: in purſuit of Truth, which yet flies from us, we abandon that Charity which would make us happy.

We may learn alſo, not only to be humble in our thoughts and words, but thankful and obedient in our hearts and lives. The Divine Nature is incomprehenſible; but our obligations and duty are evident. We are ignorant in what manner the Father, the Son, and Spirit are united: we are ſure that we have been created; we believe that we have been redeemed; and if we have not yet learned, let us deſire and ſtrive to experience what it is to be ſanctified alſo. The myſterious eſſence of God *he* knows beſt, who poſſeſſes the greateſt degree of reſemblance to him, and is himſelf, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, 'partaker of the Divine Na-
'ture.'

The ſcripture is full of this great truth, and in this article at leaſt it is ſufficiently clear. 'Hereby we do know that we know him, if
'we keep his commandments. He that ſaith,
'I know him, and keepeth not his command-
'ments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.'

Without

Without obedience, our knowledge is but ignorance, our wiſdom folly; and our belief no better, nay it is worſe than infidelity. The more we know of our Maker, and of his will, if we do it not, we ſhall be 'beaten with the 'more ſtripes.' Orthodox opinions not accompanied with a good life, like bloſſoms without fruit, by promiſing fairly aggravate the diſappointment.

What is it but mockery to diſcourſe of the Supreme Being, were it ever ſo properly, if I pay no reſpect to his authority? I define, ſuppoſe, all his attributes, but regard none of them; and while I contemplate his perfections, neither love, nor fear, nor reſemble him. How much ſuperiour to me is the moſt illiterate Ruſtic, who is faithful, juſt, and merciful? the wildeſt ſavage, who 'does by nature the things con-'tained in the law? and the heretic, who holds his miſtakes with modeſty, and adds not immorality to his errors?

'Thou believeſt, that there is one God; 'thou doeſt well; the Devils alſo believe, and 'tremble.' If our life be bad, the very apoſtate Spirits, who are reſerved in everlaſting chains under darkneſs, are religious as we are; and we have reaſon to be ſenſible of all their apprehenſions: The ſame faith ſhould be productive of the ſame fears; we too may 'believe, 'and tremble.'

'Hear, O Iſrael, The Lord our God is one 'Lord. And thou ſhalt love the Lord thy 'God, with all thine heart, and with all thy 'ſoul,

'ſoul, and with all thy might.' The ſtrength of the ſentiment is to be eſtimated by the influence it hath upon our life and actions. Whatever it be which we ſuffer to occupy ſuch a place in our affections, as to withdraw us from our duty, That becomes our God.

Every immorality, indeed, is incompatible with the belief of one God, and the ſupreme regard due to him. But there is one vice, which the Apoſtle delights to repreſent in this point of view: 'Covetouſneſs, which is Idolatry; *the* 'covetous man, who is an Idolater.'

The golden Image is ſet up in every nation, and has never wanted worſhippers. Among the profeſſed ſervants of the one true God, how many altars ſhould we find, could we read the heart, inſcribed and dedicated to this Idol!

All our unjuſt acquiſitions are ſo many oblations to *Mammon:* and we are his ſervants and worſhippers, and not God's, when our thoughts, time, and affections are ſo engaged by riches, that we violate, or neglect, for the ſake of them, the duty we owe to God or man. 'Love not the world, neither the things that 'are in the world: if any man love the 'world, the love of the Father is not in him.'

SER-

SERMON II.

SECOND COMMANDMENT. PART I.

EXOD. XX. 4,5.

Thou ſhalt not make unto thee any graven Image, or any likeneſs of any thing that is in Heaven above, or that is in the Earth beneath, or that is in the Water under the Earth. Thou ſhalt not bow down thyſelf to them, nor ſerve them.

THE medicine adminiſtered for the cure of one diſtemper will ſometimes bring on another; and this in diſorders of the mind as well as body; and in both chiefly where the *habit* is bad. What wonder indeed that our applications are unſucceſsful, when, to uſe the expreſſion of the Prophet, 'The wound REFU-'SETH to be healed?'

Where little pomp, and few ceremonies are uſed in the celebration of God's worſhip, it is too often neglected, or attended with indifference.

His adorable perfections, and divine benefits are all loſt upon us. The imagination, wanting a ſenſible object to lay hold on, is unmoved: and we can preſent our ſupplications with lifeleſs lips and a cold heart before the Author of all Being, and Giver of all good.

But

But when an Engliſh Proteſtant happens to be preſent in the congregations of Catholics abroad, he is amazed to obſerve ſuch fervours of devotion, as he was never a witneſs of among his own countrymen; ſuch violent emotions and rapture, as are not produced by prayers put up directly to Heaven, and the ſimplicity of a reaſonable ſervice.

On the other hand, we allege that thoſe very repreſentations and ſymbols which appear ſo great a help to devotion, are the hindrance of true piety and virtue; and this both among the *higher ranks* of mankind, and the *vulgar*.

The former of theſe, having the ſenſe to ſee that Religion cannot conſiſt in ſuch ceremonies, haſtily conclude that it is wholly impoſture and deluſion; and that all the preaching of the Goſpel is but fraud, and the profeſſion of it hypocriſy or enthuſiaſm. They are made utterly unbelievers by ſuch pious ſhews: religion is killed by being cheriſhed overmuch: and there is no where to be found ſo much Infidelity, as in thoſe countries, where there is moſt of this appearance of Devotion.

The *common people* too, for whoſe benefit theſe decorations of religion were deſigned, are not a little injured. For beſides that they are apt to take up the opinions of their betters, and when Irreligion is eſteemed Politeneſs, ſoon think themſelves qualified to be infidels, they get by theſe means wrong notions of religion, which are always favourable to corruptions in practice: if they fall not into Atheiſm, they

they become either enthuſiaſtical or ſuperſtitious; and in all the three caſes, their lives, it is likely, will be wicked.

When they are kindled into *enthuſiaſtic* fervours, they feel an internal impulſe, which will hearken to no reſtraint, and are carried out a great way beyond the ordinary road of duty. The offices of common life are neglected; the calls of nature, and of kindred are unheard, and God's world muſt become a wilderneſs, if all men were thus to worſhip him.

More uſually a multitude of religious rites, and a ſhewy worſhip leads the common people to *Superſtition*. They are taught to place their religion in practices, which at beſt are but ſteps towards it. They miſtake the means for the end, and are much engaged in the ſervice of God, without Godlineſs. The Divine Being is diſhonoured by their opinions of him; while they think he can be pleaſed with performances of no value, and offended without a fault: as if the heart and life were not of more conſideration with him than words and geſtures, or any offering could be preferred before innocence and charity. It is from ſuch notions as theſe, that men contract the *Judaical* diſpoſition, and exerciſe the righteouſneſs of a Phariſee; adorning the temple, if they leave their parents in neceſſity: they cringe at God's altar with hardened hearts; and are willing to atone by the mockery of penance, and numbered prayers, for the want of the Love of God, and of Juſtice to man.

So

So true is it, that Religion, as well as other objects naturally beautiful, is seen to best advantage when adorned with moderation; and suffers alike by too much Art, and by the hand of Ignorance.

It is often easy to see the mischief in the two extremes, and yet difficult to assign the exact mean at the best distance from them both. As Catholics are liable to censure for the abuse of religious rites; some Protestants are justly blameable for vehemently rejecting the whole use of them: mighty earnest in their aversion to little matters, and formal in the very abhorrence of forms. Our church in her public service, we think, is neither destitute of grace and dignity, nor yet laboriously or fancifully ceremonious; neither supinely negligent, nor vainly ostentatious. She recommends to her sons, and desire to instil into them such a reverence for religion as may be united with the love of it, a sound piety untainted by hypocrisy or enthusiasm.

Let us then improve both under her care, and by her example; fearing God with all solicitude, yet without that frivolous anxiety which is the parent of many scruples and but small improvement; and obeying men too, 'them that have the rule over us,' with a willing mind, but without servility; as 'free, but 'not using our liberty for a cloke of malici-'ousness.'

Let us have a tender conscience, with a teachable temper; 'giving no offence,' and taking

taking as little as is poſſible; and yet ready with an honeſt 'anſwer to every man, that 'aſketh a reaſon of the hope that is in *us*.'

Let us be obliging without ſelfiſh views, without partiality, without fear; and pious indeed, but neither frantick nor cenſorious; 'fully perſuaded in our own mind, *and* ſhew-'ing all meekneſs to all men;' active, and patient; warmed with zeal, and illuminated by knowledge.

Let us add humanity to our godlineſs, and 'to faith virtue;' and uniting, what indeed cannot dwell aſunder, Religion and Charity, recommend what we practiſe, 'adorn the 'doctrine of God our Saviour, *and be* living 'members of his body, which is the church.'

However agreeable the doctrines of our faith, or the mode of our worſhip may be to our own judgment, or even to the word of God, they will avail us but little, if our life be not anſwerable to them. The purity of our principles muſt be transferred into our practice; the holineſs of our prayers paſs into our diſpoſition and deportment.

It has been obſerved of the Heathens, that their errours muſt needs have an ill influence upon their lives; and that it was difficult indeed for them to be virtuous, while their religion itſelf was impure, and their very Gods impious.

Our God is of 'purer eyes than to behold 'evil: *and*, the commandment is holy and juſt 'and good.' We are not expoſed to the ſame temptation,

temptation, but then we are without their excuſe. 'That which is good *may be* made 'death unto us;' and every additional motive to goodneſs make us ſtill more the children of perdition. Chriſtians, who lead the life of Infidels and Heathens, muſt expect, not *their* puniſhment, but a worſe.

We *Proteſtants* eſpecially are on all accounts obliged to this ſanctity in our lives, and ſelf condemned if we neglect it. We pretend not to know any way of Salvation without innocence, or without repentance followed by real reformation in life and practice. The great benefits offered to all in the goſpel, every man by God's grace muſt ſecure to himſelf. No benediction, alas! that we can pronounce over any one, will make a Saint of him who continues in ſin. The Spirit itſelf may be 'quench-'ed; *and* the grace of God received in vain:' yet, not wholly in vain; ſince it will redound to the vindication of his judgments, and the greater glory of the ſupreme Juſtice in the final condemnation of the wicked.

Can it avail us in the laſt day, that our Religion was *reformed*, while we *ourſelves* were not ſo? we thank God that we are ſeparated from the errours, and freed from the chains of Popery, without breaking out into a ſtate of religious anarchy. But if in this land of light and liberty, we be yet blinded by corruption, and ſlaves to ſin, all honeſt men of every religion, and if there can be any honeſt upright man of no religion upon earth, they will all

'riſe

'rise up in the judgment against us and condemn us. Many shall come from the east 'and west,' from every region, and of all professions, 'and shall sit down with Abraham 'and Isaac, with Patriarchs, Apostles, and 'Saints, in the kingdom of Heaven, while 'the children of the kingdom,' the professors of Christianity, and pretenders to Reformation, are cast, together with all the workers of iniquity, 'into outer darkness, where shall be 'weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

SERMON III.

Second Commandment. Part II.

EXOD. xx. 5, 6.

Visiting the Iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children unto the third and fourth Generation of them that hate me: and shewing Mercy unto Thousands of them that Love me, and keep my Commandments.

WHEN, for the encouragement of piety, God is pleased to declare, that He will 'shew 'mercy unto thousands of them that love Him, 'and

'and keep his commandments,' that is, to the remoteſt relations and lateſt deſcendants of an eminently good man, treating them with peculiar tenderneſs, rewarding with an opener hand, and puniſhing more ſparingly, for his ſake to whom they belong, or from whom they ſpring; we take all theſe offers in good part, and have no difficulty in being reconciled to ſo gracious a diſpenſation. There is no complaint in this caſe of the want of a due *proportion* between the merit and the recompence: we eaſily find ourſelves qualified to receive kindneſſes; and conſent readily that Almighty God may be as liberal as He will, and with as little reaſon.

But it is much otherwiſe in the caſe of *puniſhments*. For if, in like manner, for the diſcouragement of impiety and vice, He has ſeen it neceſſary to deſcend to threatenings; and intimate, that He is a *jealous God*, not willing to 'give his glory to another; *that* He will repay 'fury to his adverſaries; *and to* eminent Idolaters *will give to drink* the cup of the fierceneſs 'of his wrath,' not only full, but *flowing over* on thoſe around them; here we are by no means ſo ſoon ſatisfied; we immediately become curious and inquiſitive, deſire to ſee the grounds and reaſons of his proceedings, and have a multitude of objections againſt the wiſdom and equity of the Divine Adminiſtration. 'Tis in vain to talk to us of general laws, or the welfare of the world; we find no plan of providence defenſible, by which we ourſelves are ſufferers;

ſufferers; nor allow that the good of the Univerſe ought to be purchaſed at ſo great a price as the affliction of perſons ſo innocent and well-deſerving.

Both innocent, and deſerving! alas! who are they? or where to be found? Do we not boaſt of imaginary qualifications, and lay claim to titles, that may be valuable indeed, but are not our's? Does it concern us what are the rights of ſuch perſons, if we are not of the number? 'There is none good but one, that is 'God. His angels he chargeth with folly: and 'the heavens are not clean in his ſight. How 'much leſs man, that is a worm!' He knows our deſert, that it is ſhame and puniſhment. We ſtand naked and open before his eyes; proud, and poor; clamorous and ignorant; demanding recompence and praiſe, when we ſhould deprecate his diſpleaſure; and challenging juſtice, while ourſelves are the criminals. Well may we ſubmit to the divine wiſdom, and patiently take our ſhare of evil, according to his will, and for the good of his world; when we reflect, that the leaſt of his mercies is more than our merit; and the greateſt of thoſe ſufferings, which for ſo many reaſons he inflicts, are leſs than we have deſerved by our own iniquities.

But *children* at leaſt are innocent: They can be guilty of no crimes to cry for vengeance, and call down that 'indignation which reſteth 'upon ſinners.' If they have no right to recompence for ſervices, which they have not diſcharged:

charged; is it juſt to expoſe them to puniſhment for tranſgreſſions they were not able to commit?

The word *children*, in the language of Scripture, is not confined to *infants*. When it is written, 'I am a jealous God, viſiting the iniquity of the Fathers upon the children,' their age is not ſpecified: There is nothing ſaid to denote their infancy, or their innocence. 'Unto the third and fourth generation of them 'that hate me:' The title of 'Haters of God' was purchaſed indeed by their anceſtors; it is inherited, and deſerved too by themſelves; who give proof of their legitimate deſcent, and fill up the meaſure of the iniquity of their fathers, by their own perſonal *atchievements*.

Or were it otherwiſe; were they ſuch as could not 'diſcern between the right hand and 'the left:' who is the giver of life? Is not God? If he had never given it, had he been to blame? If he takes it back, is not his will a reaſon? may he not withdraw from us the benefits, which he himſelf has lent; and whenever he ſees fit, without any conſent or demerit of ours, reduce us to inſenſibility, or to nothing? Be it, that he is bound by a law of juſtice, that will not bend even to ſave the Univerſe from ruin; he is ſurely not anſwerable for the reſumption of his favours, as he did not engage for the continuance of them, but may 'do what he will with his own.'

Nay, ſhould he at any time proceed even further than this, oppreſſing with calamities thoſe

thoſe whom he had never loaded with his benefits, and rendering the life of the moſt innocent worſe than death; we may reflect, that he holds the reins of nature in his hand; that we ſee but a little of his ways; that it will always be in his power, as it is in the power of no other to remember, reſtore, and *rectify*. That all ſouls are in his power and live before him. Even death removes us not out of his empire; He can ſtill recompenſe the ſufferings of his ſervants beyond the grave, and change the garments dipped in blood into robes of glory. His uncontrolable *power* becomes the foundation of juſt *authority*; and he has rights which can appertain only to the *Ruler* of the Univerſe, beſides thoſe that belong to him as the *Author* of it.

But after all, there is really no neceſſity, that, in order to vindicate the ſanction in this commandment, we ſhould trace with ſo much anxiety the rules of juſtice, and the foundation of morality: It is ſufficient only to open our eyes, and have recourſe in this caſe to experience.

Whether the Law of Moſes be the word of God, or no; the World, I preſume, is his work: The laws of *Nature* at leaſt are of his appointment. Now according to theſe laws, we ſee that children are every day ſuffering the moſt grievous calamities, on account of the crimes of their parents and progenitors. It is God's will, that they ſhould do ſo: he has made the world ſo, that they muſt. What

therefore we know he hath done, in many inſtances which we ſee, we may well believe he will do in others, if he be pleaſed to tell us ſo.

But the inſtances which we ſee, are according to the courſe of nature. That is the very thing inſiſted on. God hath eſtabliſhed the courſe of nature; and by the courſe of nature we find a multitude of ſuch ſufferings inflicted, as thoſe which he threatens in the commandment.

Would you urge, that theſe natural ſufferings are not *puniſhments?* Shall I aſk, whether they are *viſitations?* Alas! to how little purpoſe both of us! Will our words make any alteration in them? Are the *things* changed, becauſe we *name* them differently? Do they become, either leſs the act of Almighty God, or leſs calamitous to thoſe on whom they fall?

When a new born infant is carried off by a malady, owing, ſuppoſe, to the intemperance of it's parent; the child is not to blame, yet it feels pain and dies.

It is written, 'The Lord ſtruck the child 'that Uriah's wife bare unto David.' Are not the laws of nature, by which the child of the intemperate perſon dies, the hand of the ſame God, who ſlew this child of David? Or was this ſufferer more innocent, than the other?

The Supreme Governor is directed, no doubt, by his wiſdom and rectitude in all his actions, and all his appointments. The reaſons of his general laws, and of his particular acts may be different, and yet both, no doubt, are alike good.

good. But in the guilt of the parents, and the consequent death of the innocent children, the two instances are perfectly similar: and no complaint can be made against the Divine Government in favour of the one sufferer, that will not be equally applicable to the other.

Can we but admire that heavenly wisdom, which *reacheth*, as the wise man speaks, 'from 'one end to another, and sweetly doth order 'all things?' and among the rest, hath established this harmony between natural religion and revealed? in so much that every cavil at the doctrines of revelation, is found to be an objection against the religion of nature, and an arraignment of the Creator of the world.

Yet, say we, 'The way of the Lord is not 'equal: The fathers have eaten sour grapes, 'and the children's teeth are set on edge. 'Therefore will I judge you, O house of Israel, 'every one according to his ways, saith the 'Lord God.'

You complain of the partiality of my Providence; therefore will I be indeed impartial to you, and deal with you according to your deserts: you demand justice, and you shall have it: but remember, that it will descend in punishment. Since you call me so strictly to account, I will be strict and exact in my reckoning with you: 'I will judge you, O house of 'Israel, every one according to his ways, saith 'the Lord God.'

Oh! can there be a severer threatening in the whole storehouse of divine vengeance? How

impatiently do we call out, for what will be our greateſt calamity! Alas! God is but juſt, when He condemns us ſinners to everlaſting puniſhment: and is this, what we deſire of Him? this, what we reproach Him for refuſing? *Forgive Him this wrong.* His denial may be no more than a delay. The recompence we require may overtake us: not ſo ſoon indeed as we aſk, or as we have deſerved; but in full weight and meaſure at laſt, and with ſuch clear *demonſtration* of it's juſtice, as to overwhelm all our complaints and hopes together.

Inſtead of cenſuring the Divine ways, let us amend our own. Let us do, what we know certainly to be *our* duty; and not preſume to ſay what is *His: His Duty*! to *us*! who, what are we? 'He giveth not account of any of his 'matters.' He will do what He ſees fit; and that will be what *is* ſo.

Nay, He is ready to do for us, not that which is *not* right, 'That be far from Him;' but that which we have no right to require: He will reward us, if we do what is but our duty; and when we do it not, if we repent, He will forgive.

'Repent, and turn yourſelves from all your 'tranſgreſſions, ſo iniquity ſhall not be your 'ruin:' It is the very application, with which Almighty God concludes a long Apology for that conduct, which we find liable, it ſeems, to ſo many objections: but to this concluſion, at leaſt, we can have none; or none that we will avow. Such offers of mercy, as they are plain to

to be underſtood, ſo they muſt of neceſſity be approved by us. It remains, that we thankfully embrace them. 'Caſt away from you all 'your tranſgreſſions whereby ye have tranſ-'greſſed, and make you a new heart, and a 'new ſpirit; for why will ye die, O houſe of 'Iſrael!'

Laſtly, let us look with reverence on that obvious but awful diſpenſation, by which the behaviour of every individual is connected with the welfare, or the ſufferings of ſo many perſons beſides himſelf: As a bad man is a publick calamity, which yet under the direction of the Father of all, will terminate we hope in good: ſo a pious and eminently worthy perſon is an univerſal bleſſing; reaping the fruit of his virtues in his own happineſs, ſpreading the voice of joy and health throughout the dwellings of the righteous, and entailing the divine bleſſing on thoſe that come after him to the lateſt generations.

SER-

SERMON IV.

Second Commandment. Part III.

JOB xl. 3,4.

Then Job answered the Lord, and said, behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.

BEING called upon to give an account of certain sums of money belonging to the publick, the Roman General, you know, returned for answer, 'It was on this day I conquered 'Hannibal.'

Almost after the same manner, if we might presume to draw such parallels, when Almighty God is represented here in the book of Job, as descending from Heaven to put an end to the long debate concerning the equity of his providence, he regards neither arguments nor answers; condemns his defenders, offers nothing for himself; but when you expect his reasons, has recourse to his authority: and for a reply to all complaints of his injustice, 'The Lord answered unto Job out of the whirlwind, and 'said, Hast thou an arm like God? or canst 'thou thunder with a voice like him?'

The pious patriarch seems also to be sensible of the weight of this argument; and, however bold

bold and clamorous before, is convinced at laſt by ſuch deciſive reaſoning: 'I know, that thou 'canſt do every thing; therefore have I utter-'ed that I underſtood not: mine eye ſeeth 'thee; wherefore I abhor myſelf, and repent 'in duſt and aſhes.'

What pretenſions indeed can man poſſibly have to expoſtulate with his Creator? Where is the wrong, if he who made us all, take away the life of any, guilty or innocent, whenever he pleaſes?

But we are told, that he has *promiſed* not to act in a manner ſo arbitrary. And one of the moſt remarkable paſſages of Scripture to this purpoſe, is that in the prophet Ezekiel: 'Be-'hold, all ſouls are mine; as the ſoul of the 'father, ſo alſo the ſoul of the ſon is mine: 'the ſoul that ſinneth, it ſhall die. The ſon 'ſhall not bear the iniquity of the father; 'neither ſhall the father bear the iniquity of 'the ſon.'

It is aſked, How is this conſiſtent with the ſanction annexed to the ſecond commandment? And does it not amount to an *abrogation*, or at leaſt to a *ſuſpenſion*, of it?

Abrogation! and *Suſpenſion!* alas! ſuch language, is not enough ſuited to the imperfection of human knowledge, and ſavours too much of *ſyſtem.*

In the 'day of judgment,' we know, that 'Every one ſhall receive according to that he 'hath done, whether it be good or bad;' and, by God's grace in Chriſt, ſhall 'have rejoicing

'in

'in himself alone, and not in another.' And in regard to the present life, these predictions of the prophet Ezekiel, in whatever extent they were meant, were, no doubt, faithfully fulfilled; though we may be little able, we especially at this distance, to specify the times, or persons, or occurrences, of which they were spoken.

It may be more easy perhaps to single out an event or two, of which they certainly were *not* intended.

The destruction of *Solomon's temple*, for example, together with the captivity of *seventy years*, was plainly of the number of those punishments, which were inflicted, not only for the sins of the sufferers, but also for the sins of those who went before them. 'Like unto 'him (*that is* Josiah) was there no king, that 'turned to the Lord with all his heart, and 'with all his soul, and with all his might. 'Notwithstanding, the Lord turned not from 'the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith 'his anger was kindled against Judah.'

'And they burnt the house of God, and 'brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt 'all the palaces thereof with fire.'

'Surely at the commandment of the Lord 'came this upon Judah, to remove them out 'of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did: and also for the 'innocent blood that he shed; for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, which the Lord 'would not pardon.'

The

The deſtruction alſo of the *ſecond temple*, and the aſtoniſhing ſlaughter and exciſion almoſt of the whole people of the Jews, which accompanied and followed it, as they are plainly foretold by our Lord, ſo they ſeem to be ſpoken of by Him as a *Divine Puniſhment*, and ſpecial Judgment, not only for the crucifixion of our Lord Himſelf, but alſo for the violence done to all the Holy men and Prophets that had been before Him. 'Fill ye up the meaſure of your 'Fathers.—Behold, I ſend unto you Prophets, 'and wiſe men, and Scribes; and ſome of 'them ye ſhall kill and crucify, and ſome of 'them ſhall ye ſcourge in your ſynagogues, 'and perſecute them from City to City: that 'upon you may come all the righteous blood 'ſhed upon the earth, from the blood of 'righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias 'ſon of Barachias, whom ye ſlew between the 'Temple and the Altar. Verily I ſay unto 'you, all theſe things ſhall come upon this ge-'neration.—I ſay unto you, it ſhall be re-'quired of this generation.'

And that we may the leſs wonder at theſe examples of divine puniſhment, or at leaſt may mingle reverence with our amazement, in the very ſame manner Almighty God ſeems to have dealt ſometimes with *other nations* beſides the Jews; bearing with them long in their iniquities, and then interpoſing at laſt, by his ſpecial providence, to take the more exemplary vengeance for the ſins of many generations together. *Thou*, ſaith He to Abram, 'ſhalt go to 'thy

'thy fathers in peace, thou ſhalt be buried in 'a good old age:' *but in the* fourth generation, *they*, (that is, thy poſterity,) 'ſhall come hither 'again; for the iniquity of the Amorites is 'not yet FULL.'

'Thus ſaith the Lord of Hoſts,' (they are the words of the Prophet Samuel to King Saul, about four hundred and fifty years after the departure of the Iſraelites out of Egypt,) 'I re-'member that which Amalek did to Iſrael, how 'he laid wait for him in the way when he 'came up from Egypt: now go, and ſmite 'Amalek, and utterly deſtroy all that they 'have, and ſpare them not; but ſlay both man 'and woman, infant and ſuckling, ox and 'ſheep, camel and aſs.' The Amalekites were indeed themſelves *ſinners*; but the offences alſo of their forefathers, you ſee, for many generations, are taken into the account, to fill up the meaſure of their iniquities, and aggravate their condemnation.

What ſhall we ſay more? or what other choice indeed is left us, but to confeſs our ignorance, and acquieſce in God's will? 'Right-'eouſneſs and Judgment are the habitation of 'his ſeat; *but* clouds and darkneſs are round 'about him.' His very truth, and mercy, by which we live, on which all our hopes reſt, however glorious and reſplendent in Him, are ſhewn to human ſight with a luſtre dim and interrupted; the brightneſs of a ſky broken with clouds, and wet with the drops of rain.

When

When we *diſcern* the footſteps of wiſdom and goodneſs in the works or the word of God, how juſt is it to acknowledge, and delightful to admire them? 'It is a joyful and pleaſant 'thing to be thankful.' Yet all our religious ſentiments may be properly tinctured with awe: 'Serve the Lord in fear; *even* rejoice 'unto him with reverence.'

To *repreſent* alſo the divine wiſdom to others, in order to awaken the ſame juſt ſentiments in them, is on every account highly commendable. But here too, let Underſtanding be our leader, and our companion Modeſty. Our charity ſhould be illuminated by knowledge, and the flame of zeal tremble. Otherwiſe, the apologies we make for Providence may themſelves want pardon; and our panegyricks on the Almighty be 'the ſacrifice 'of fools. My wrath is kindled againſt thee,' ſaid the Lord to one of his three famous advocates, 'and againſt thy two friends: therefore 'offer up for yourſelves a burnt offering; leſt I 'deal with you after your folly, in that ye 'have not ſpoken of me the thing which is 'right.'

Our good will may not always atone for our preſumption. 'Will ye ſpeak wickedly for 'God?' Dare we draw near even to vindicate the moſt holy without ſome ſenſe of our own defilement? He is attacked impiouſly, we ruſh in irreverently: The ark is ſhaken, we put forth unhallowed hands.

'God

'God is very greatly to be feared in the 'council of the Saints, and to be had in reve-'rence of all them that are round about him.'

Humility, the moſt profound and perfect ſubmiſſion, is the proper diſpoſition of every creature in his preſence; of angels, archangels, all, and the higheſt orders of celeſtial Beings that miniſter before the throne of God: how much more of 'Man that is a worm, and the 'ſon of man which is a worm.'

We ſubmit then, after much diſputing on a dark ſubject; after much diſputing, perhaps darker; we ſubmit, Lord, ourſelves to thee; our conduct to thy command, and our blind reaſon and worldly wiſdom to thy heavenly light. The very ſentiments of truſt and gratitude, which are inſpired by thy unnumbered mercies, we temper with reverence and godly fear. Thy *goodneſs* we cannot ſearch to it's ſource; but we are ſure we have not deſerved it: and thy *judgments*, if they fall on our head, will only deſcend upon the guilty. No oppoſition can be made to this inſtance of thy juſtice; and however diſpoſed to complain or cavil, we muſt at leaſt approve the ſentence of *our own* condemnation.

What can we do, but flee 'for refuge to lay 'hold upon the hope ſet before us? *Him*, who 'of God is made unto us wiſdom, and right-'eouſneſs, and ſanctification, and redemption;' we, unprofitable ſervants, rewarded for His merit; we, ſinners, ſheltered from the ſtorm of deſerved wrath under His ſufferings.

We

We diſpute againſt God's providence, and call his attributes into queſtion, when the innocent are afflicted: Behold here the only perſon who was truly ſuch: 'it pleaſed the Lord to 'make his ſoul an offering for ſin,' which he committed not: 'he had done no violence; 'yet was he ſtricken, ſmitten of God, and af- 'flicted: he was wounded for our tranſgreſ- 'ſions, he was bruiſed for our iniquities. All 'we like ſheep have gone aſtray; and the Lord 'hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.'

Will you accept theſe offers of divine goodneſs? Do you conſent to be ſaved on ſuch terms? Is the grace of God welcome, though it be a 'Free gift?' and if you could not merit ſuch mercy; can you be thankful for it?

Or will you rather, perhaps, ſtand up in vindication of your rights? refuſe to be puniſhed, when you have not offended; and for another's ſufferings diſdain to be forgiven?

Alas! we know not what we do, when we do other than conform to the purpoſes of God. It is His world: and ſubmiſſion to Him is the ſummit both of virtue and of wiſdom. All is right which He wills; every thing good that comes from God.

'The peſtilence that walketh in darkneſs, 'the ſickneſs that deſtroyeth in the noon day;' the moſt extenſive and terrible of his judgments, which diſtinguiſh not, to our eye, the righteous from the wicked; pitying neither the innocence of infancy, nor the infirmities of age; but laying waſte the works of art and nature

ture together, covering the cultivated land with desolation, and cutting off from the crouded city man and beast, are all the messengers and ministers of God: and we know that they all, for 'we know that *all things*, work together 'for good to them that love God.'

SERMON V.

THIRD COMMANDMENT. PART I.

JAMES v. 12.

Above all things, my Brethren, swear not; neither by Heaven, neither by the Earth, neither by any other Oath.

WHEN a particular vice is observed to be predominant, the preacher sets himself to oppose it with all his might. He draws out all his train of reasons and arguments; and if he find himself furnished with any stores of eloquence also, he scruples not to make use even of that dangerous weapon. He represents the irregularity against which he is engaged, as the most heinous of offences: whatever other crime we

we overlook, he requires us to beware of this capital evil; and prohibits every action that but approaches near it, in the moſt comprehenſive expreſſions, and under the ſevereſt penalties. For the making of neceſſary exceptions, and limitations, we are left to our own reflections, to nature, to experience, and the common ſenſe of all the world. In the mean time, Caſuiſtry being no part of his province, he preſſes forward to diſſuade, rebuke, and threaten. He ſtays not to look around, and collect all the caſes where his maxims may give way; nor lets the force and flame of his exhortations die, under the weight of unſeaſonable and frigid diſtinctions.

'Above all things, my brethren, ſwear not.' How! Is the ſin here forbidden, the worſt of all ſins? Grows there no other offence ſo rank in that ſoil, fertile of vice, the heart of man? It is indeed utterly incapable of defence, or excuſe; fooliſh, profane, and hurtful; diſhonourable to the Supreme Being, and detrimental to mankind. But ſo, alas! are many other vices. All indeed are ſo, either directly, or in their conſequences. But ſome there are ſurely in themſelves ſo odious, in their effects ſo fatal, that they may be allowed to claim this infamous preeminence; ſo that he who ſwears, and that inconſiderately and falſly, 'by heaven, or by 'earth, or by any other oath,' however liable to blame and puniſhment, will hardly fall into a greater condemnation.

'Above

'Above all, taking the ſhield of faith,— 'above all things, have fervent charity.'— We need not ſet the graces and virtues of our religion in competition with each other; we diſtinguiſh beſt, when we are poſſeſſed of all. It is not neceſſary to weigh the vices in ſo exact a balance. The very ſame Apoſtle, who is in this inſtance ſo urgent, 'above all things, my 'brethren, ſwear not,' has already taught us, that 'whoſoever ſhall keep the whole law, 'and yet offend in one point he is guilty of all.'

The text of St. James is taken from the words of our Lord in his ſermon on the mount. 'I ſay unto you, ſwear not at all: neither by 'heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the 'earth, for it is his footſtool; neither by Jeru-'ſalem;' and ſo on. After this follows almoſt immediately: 'I ſay unto you, that ye reſiſt not 'evil: whoſoever ſhall ſmite thee on thy right 'cheek, turn to him the other alſo.' What! not hold his hand at leaſt, if it were ſtretched out to murder me? If God ever give him the grace to repent, it will alleviate the anguiſh of his remorſe, that the crime which he had the wickedneſs to attempt, he had not the unhappy ſucceſs to execute. 'Turn to him the other 'alſo:' How! will you deny me the uſe of that prudent precaution, which is even commanded by our Lord himſelf? 'when they perſecute you in one city, flee unto another.'

But the perſons who ſcruple to ſwear, diſclaim reſiſtance alſo: and in this they are conſiſtent at leaſt, if they be not wiſe. It is written,

ten, 'If any man will ſue thee at the law, and 'take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak 'alſo.'—Are they willing to deliver up their property always to the firſt invader? Of theſe rights they are ſometimes, and with reaſon, a little more tenacious.

'Let all wrath, and anger be put away from 'you,' ſays the Apoſtle Paul; yet he himſelf had written but a few lines before, 'be ye an-'gry, and ſin not.' And our Lord himſelf, when 'they watched him, whether he would 'heal on the ſabbath day, looked round about 'on them with anger, being grieved for the 'hardneſs of their hearts. Honour all men: 'love the brotherhood. Huſbands love your 'wives, even as Chriſt alſo loved the Church. 'Children obey your parents: honour thy fa-'ther and mother.'—and yet 'If any man 'come after me, and hate not his father and 'mother, and wife and children, and brethren 'and ſiſters, yea, and his own life alſo, he can-'not be my diſciple.' It is not the mere ſound of a word, that we can rely upon for the knowledge of what the ſcripture teaches in any caſe: the nature of the ſubject, the ſcope of the writer, the lights afforded from other parts of ſcripture, and from reaſon alſo, deſerve all to be attended to. So that the true interpretation of a paſſage is ſometimes very different from that, which may be firſt ſuggeſted to a haſty heedleſs hearer.

The uſe of oaths is not prohibited in the *third commandment*. The name of the Lord

cannot be ſaid to be taken *in vain*, when it is uſed in the ſupport of *Truth*, upon occaſions of *Importance*.

Secondly, Nor is there any thing like ſuch a prohibition in all the *Old Teſtament*: though it is certain, that oaths were in uſe among other nations, and among the Jews, both before the giving of the Law, and under it.

Thirdly, On the contrary, there are many *examples* recorded in the book of Geneſis, and other parts of ſcripture, of the beſt men, who made uſe of oaths, or exacted them of others; Abraham, Iſaac, Jacob, and Joſeph, and many more.

Beſides example, we meet with *directions* and precepts relative to the uſe of oaths, together with other marks of the approbation of them. 'If a man vow a vow unto the Lord, 'or ſwear an oath, to bind his ſoul with a 'bond; he ſhall not break his word: he ſhall 'do according to all that proceedeth out of his 'mouth.—Thou ſhalt fear the Lord thy God, 'and ſerve him, and ſhalt ſwear by his name. '—Lord, who ſhall dwell in thy tabernacle, or 'who ſhall reſt upon thy holy hill? Even he 'that leadeth an uncorrupt life—he that ſwea-'reth unto his neighbour, and diſappointeth 'him not.—Unto me every knee ſhall bow, 'every tongue ſhall ſwear.—He that ſweareth 'in the earth, ſhall ſwear by the God of truth. '—If thou wilt return, O Iſrael, ſaith the 'Lord, return unto me—and thou ſhalt ſwear, 'the Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and

'in

'in righteouſneſs.—And they ſware unto the 'Lord with a loud voice—and all Judah re-'joiced at the oath; for they had ſworn with 'all their heart, and ſought him with their 'whole deſire: and he was found of them; 'and the Lord gave them reſt round about.'

An oath indeed is juſtly conſidered as an act of Religion.

Firſt, It is an acknowledgment of the power and *divinity* of the Being we invoke.

Secondly, It is an acknowledgment of his moral attributes, and *providence*; that he is a lover of truth and juſtice, that he marks our actions, and will call us to account for them.

Thirdly, It is an acknowledgment of this, made in a *public manner*, before many witneſſes, and with great ſolemnity. Oaths therefore are uſeful; or may be ſo, if the fault be not in ourſelves; both by impreſſing ſentiments of Religion, and by ſtrengthening the fidelity, and mutual confidence of men in each other; and this in caſes ſometimes, to which no other bonds but theſe of Religion and conſcience can reach; in contracts of the very higheſt importance, among private perſons, and between princes and kingdoms. Had our Lord deſigned to put an end to all oaths abſolutely, would He not have forbidden us to ſwear by Almighty God himſelf? Of this oath He is ſilent. 'I ſay unto you ſwear not at all, neither by 'heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other' ſuch like, vain, fantaſtic, abſurd *oath*.

The Apoſtle Paul, who ſurely underſtood our Lord's intention on this ſubject, ſcruples not even in his epiſtles to the chriſtian churches, to confirm his aſſertions by oaths.—'God 'is my witneſs, whom I ſerve in the goſpel of 'his ſon.—Now the things which I write unto 'you, behold, before God, I lie not. The God 'and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which is 'bleſſed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not.' You ſee, the Apoſtle Paul makes uſe of oaths, both in effect, and in very expreſs terms: Not indeed 'by heaven, *nor* by the earth, nor any 'other *ſuch like* oath:' he ſeeks no ſuch vain ſubterfuges againſt profaneneſs or perjury; but ſwears, as he lived, in 'ſimplicity *as well as* 'ſincerity, by the God and Father of our Lord 'Jeſus Chriſt,' than which a more awful name is not to be uttered by the voice of man.

But 'who is Paul, or who is Apollos?' That very God and Father of our Lord hath ſtrengthened his own promiſes, to thoſe that truſt in him, by the confirmation of an oath. Be it, that the uſe of oaths is founded upon the corruption of our nature, upon our falſhood and inſtability; the Almighty, at leaſt, is free from this ſuſpicion: He is not to be charged with inſincerity. Yet 'God, willing more abun-'dantly to ſhew unto the heirs of promiſe the 'immutability of his counſel, confirmed it by 'an oath: That by two immutable things,' that is, his immutable counſel, and inviolable oath, 'in which it was impoſſible for God to 'lie, we might have a ſtrong conſolation, who 'have

'have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope 'set before us.'

But if, in imitation of the plain example of the Supreme Being himself, and in oppoſition, as we think, to none of his commands, in cauſes of importance, for the ſake of truth, in ſupport of juſtice, at the call of charity, we engage our religion as well as honour, and ſubmit to be bound by this accumulated obligation; let us not forget to imitate the ſame perfect pattern in that *fidelity* alſo and *truth*, which may render the aſſiſtance of *oaths* as little neceſſary as poſſible. This at leaſt we may do ſafely; without danger of offending God, and without cenſure from any ſect of Chriſtians. Whether it be *lawful* to ſwear, or not; it is certainly *a duty* to ſpeak truth, and to act honeſtly. The controverſy concerning oaths would come to a very deſirable end, if all parties would but draw this concluſion from it.

However we may differ from thoſe who ſcruple the uſe of oaths, we muſt agree with them in this; that the moſt certain and unexceptionable way of *gaining credit*, is always to *ſpeak Truth*. And if *they* be careful to give us this ſecurity to rely upon, we have not much reaſon to complain of the exchange. Their *practice* will be the beſt *vindication* of their profeſſions. Though we do right, on our part, to 'be fully perſuaded in our own mind;' we may well permit *them* to plead *conſcience*, who can give the moſt inviolable *fidelity* for a proof of

of their conſcientiouſneſs: let them freely enjoy any diſtinction or privilege, ſo long as they never uſe it for a 'cloke of maliciouſneſs, *or* '*of* fraud.'

And perſons of all perſuaſions on this ſubject, or on any other, may do well to reflect, that God is witneſs of every thing. Whether we invoke him or not, ſtill he is preſent. Though we cautiouſly decline the *uſe* of his holy *name*, and ſubſtitute ſome object of leſs veneration in his place; or if we trifle with him by *mental reſervations*, or by putting to words a ſenſe of our own, different from that which is acknowledged and underſtood; or if we *refuſe* to *ſwear* at all from pretended or real ſcruples; all theſe evaſive expedients will be found inſufficient to ſcreen our inſincerity from his reſentment. *Falſhood* is offenſive to him, as certainly as Perjury. 'Lying lips are abo-'mination to the Lord. The Lord ſhall root 'out all deceitful lips. Lord, who ſhall dwell 'in thy tabernacle?—even he that leadeth an 'uncorrupt life, and doeth the thing which is 'right, and ſpeaketh the truth from his heart; 'he that hath uſed no deceit in his tongue, nor 'done evil to his neighbour. He that ſweareth 'unto his neighbour,' or if he have not ſworn unto him, 'diſappointeth him not, though it 'were to his own hindrance. Whoſo doeth 'theſe things ſhall never fall.'

SER-

SERMON VI.

THIRD COMMANDMENT. PART II.

EXOD. xx. 7.

Thou ſhalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltleſs that taketh his Name in vain.

IF we undertake to treat of oaths, it is proper, no doubt, impartially to repreſent, both how far they may be allowed; and in the caſes where they are not allowable, how greatly they ought to be condemned. The former, however, of theſe two points is not generally ſo ſeaſonable, nor ſo important as the latter. Scruples are not ſo common as profaneneſs, nor by any means ſo detrimental: and to almoſt every congregation of chriſtians the beſt and moſt uſeful diſcourſe concerning oaths is that, I fear, which brings the beſt and ſtrongeſt arguments *againſt* them.

But indeed, when we maintain that oaths are properly acts of religion towards God, and adapted to promote truth and confidence among men, we are ſo far from giving encouragement to the practice of common ſwearing, that, in all juſt eſtimation, we plead ſtrongly on the other ſide. For this profane abuſe of oaths plainly

plainly tends to degrade the dignity, and deſtroy the uſefulneſs of all oaths whatever. There is not a moment's interval between familiarity and contempt. What wonder if, thus proſtituted, they meet with little reverence on the moſt awful occaſions?

Were they not capable of being applied to any uſeful purpoſe, it would be but a *ſingle* crime to do hurt with them: whereas now we are anſwerable, not only for the miſchief we occaſion, but the want of all the good which we prevent. Out of our own mouths we are condemned: and profane ſwearing is more criminal in *us*, than it would be in one of thoſe perſons, who are perſuaded, that oaths are in all caſes unneceſſary, and abſolutely and utterly forbidden.

Yet the people of that perſuaſion, to do them juſtice, in this reſpect are very little guilty. It is rarely that you ſhall find any of that ſect, who maintain that even ſerious oaths are not allowable, falling into profane. Their opinion therefore, however miſtaken, yet at leaſt may be borne with; and a practice ſo conformable to it, lays claim to our commendation. Whereas we, by a conduct inconſiſtent with any principles, and *doubly* wrong upon our own, do evil with the means of good, and profane what we pretend to hold ſacred.

Is it not ſurpriſing, that a practice ſo contrary to religion, and detrimental to ſociety ſhould have abounded ſo much as this hath done, in almoſt all kingdoms and ages? Though

it

it is indeed ſtill too common among us; we have no reaſon to complain that it is more ſo, than in former times, or foreign countries.

The Greek and Latin nations were far from being faultleſs in this reſpect; nor did they confine themſelves to any one form of ſwearing, or one object. They had a multitude of Divinities, adapted each to a different purpoſe: but every one of them ready to lend his name, as it might be moſt ſuitable to the inclination, of the perſon diſpoſed to make this bad uſe of it.

Whether the inhabitants of the Britiſh Iſland were formerly deficient in this article of vice, or whatever might be the reaſon, our Norman conquerors, we are told, brought over with them a great ſtock. And ſeveral of the Monarchs of that formidable race made themſelves remarkable, as for their other great exploits, ſo each of them for a particular mode of common ſwearing, of which he was pleaſed to ſet an example, and to become the profeſſed protector and patron. Some few of theſe ſelect forms have had the fortune to ſurvive even to this day; but meet with no reſpect now, like other favourites without merit, when their maſters are no more.

The ancient Roman Emperors being far greater than ordinary Kings, took upon them proportionably greater ſtate even in this ceremony of oaths. For though they might themſelves condeſcend, on occaſion, to invoke Jupiter, or Hercules, or any other Deity, whom they

they were pleaſed to honour with their notice; they required their ſubjects and ſlaves to offer incenſe to the Emperor's own image, and to ſwear by his name.

In ſhort, the cuſtom of profane ſwearing has overſpread the world. And yet this ſingle plea of cuſtom is all that can be alleged in it's excuſe; while there is ſuch a Multitude of the juſteſt reaſons that condemn it.

Paſſing by the Idolatry there would be in ſwearing by falſe Gods, with any real reſpect to their authority, and the Abſurdity and Impiety united in the invocation of empty names; let us ſuppoſe the offence in queſtion to conſiſt in calling upon the Supreme Being in a form of words appropriated to ſwearing, yet without any particular intention at the time ſeriouſly to requeſt his interpoſition; but merely to ſignify, that we are angry perhaps, or perhaps merry; that we are ſomewhat ſurpriſed, or ſcarcely ſober; that we are very poſitive, or willing to be thought witty; or perhaps without any intention or meaning whatever.

And where is the mighty harm, it may be ſaid, ſince it is all in ſport?

Sport! with whom? The Creator and Lord of the Univerſe? before whom the higheſt orders of celeſtial Beings fall down, and worſhip? whom no man can ſee and live? Is He a ſubject for ſport?

Or were He leſs great; conſider, He is *your* Creator and Lord. You 'live, and move, 'and have your being in Him.' He made you what

what you are: He gives you all you have: 'He taketh away your breath, you die, and 'are turned again to your duſt. *Nay*, can 'deſtroy both body and ſoul in hell.' Is He a ſubject for ſport? He gave his own, and only begotten ſon to ſuffer death, to be crucified for your ſins: Is He a ſubject of ſport?

As to religious matters, you have nothing to do with them. Are you ſure of that? Can you demonſtrate then, that there is no God who made you? No Saviour to judge you? You know at leaſt that you muſt die: what if you ſhould then find, that you have been miſtaken? will you ſtand ſuch a hazard for ſport?

Undertake ſome bold profitable perjury. True wiſdom indeed will condemn your conduct ſtill. Alas! 'What is a man profited, if 'he gain the whole world, and loſe his own 'ſoul?' But you will be able to reflect, that you had before your eyes; when you went aſtray, the appearance of advantage; and were undone for what you once hoped might have been uſeful.

You look for no benefit from this vice: do you receive any *pleaſure* from it? It is wrong, you muſt confeſs; but ſo delightful and ſweet perhaps, that you know not how to abſtain. Poſſibly you have often reſolved againſt it, but through the imbecility of human nature, to no purpoſe; relapſing continually and almoſt unavoidably into a practice, which makes the whole comfort and ſatisfaction of your life.

You

You muſt know your own comforts beſt. If you aſſert, that ſwearing is ſo prodigiouſly pleaſing, who ſhall take upon him to contradict you? Only it will be a myſtery, of which we cannot have any comprehenſion.

When a *glutton*, or a *drunkard* pleads the delight he takes in his intemperance; we underſtand that the appetites of *hunger* and *thirſt*, which are neceſſary to our ſubſiſtence, and to the gratification of which there is naturally annexed ſome degree of pleaſure, have been ſo enlarged by exceſs, and perverted by abuſe, that the poor Man finds a real difficulty in refraining from the exceſſes that deſtroy him.

The moſt intemperate *rage*, however dangerous and criminal, is but the extreme of the paſſion of *anger*; the ſatisfaction of which is the removal of a preſent pain, and the ultimate end of it, *ſelf defence*.

It might puzzle a Philoſopher to trace the *love of ſwearing* to it's original principle, and aſſign it's place in the conſtitution of man.

Is it a paſſion, or an appetite, or an inſtinct? What is it's juſt meaſure, it's proper object, it's ultimate end?

Or ſhall we conclude that it is entirely the work of art? a vice, which men have invented for themſelves without proſpect of pleaſure or profit, and to which there is no imaginable temptation in nature?

Can any thing further be thought of in it's defence? Is it an *honour* to ſwear? There are indeed ſome perſons, if we may judge by the ſelf-

ſelf-complacency apparent in their air and manner, who are ſo far miſtaken, as to fancy that this vice is an improvement of diſcourſe, giving a ſpirit, a kind of high reliſh to their ſentiments; and accordingly they ſerve it up to you, on every occaſion, and mix it with all their remarks. Indeed it takes upon itſelf ſometimes to be more than a mere ornament in converſation, and becomes the moſt conſiderable part of what people have to offer. You find, if you reflect on what they have ſaid, that the *oath* is the whole ſubſtance of the obſervation.

If it be an accompliſhment, it is ſuch a one as the meaneſt perſon may make himſelf maſter of; requiring neither rank nor fortune, neither genius nor learning.

But if it be no teſt of wit; we muſt allow perhaps that it wears the appearance of *valour*. Alas! what is the *appearance* of any thing? The little birds perch upon the image of an Eagle.

True Bravery is ſedate, and inoffenſive: if it refuſe to ſubmit to inſults, it offers none; begins no diſputes, enters into no needleſs quarrels; is above the little, troubleſome ambition to be diſtinguiſhed every moment: it hears in ſilence, and replies with modeſty; fearing no enemy, and making none; and is as much aſhamed of inſolence as of cowardice.

Laſtly, the vice of common ſwearing is prohibited by the laws of God and man.

It

It is an open violation of your country's laws, enacted by the higheſt authority in this nation, both wiſely and juſtly, with a view to the publick good: nor can you, ſo long as you continue notoriouſly guilty in this reſpect, lay claim to the title of a *good citizen.*

That of a *good chriſtian* perhaps you are not ambitious of obtaining: Or elſe, what further occaſion is there for words or arguments? Profane ſwearing is diſpleaſing to Almighty God; it is forbidden, and will be puniſhed by him. 'I ſay unto you, ſwear not at all; neither by 'heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the 'earth, for it is his footſtool: but let your 'communication be yea, yea; nay, nay: for 'whatſoever is more than theſe cometh of evil. 'Thou ſhalt not take the name of the Lord thy 'God in vain: *the threatening follows*; the 'Lord will not hold him *guiltleſs* that taketh 'his name in vain.' There is more intended than expreſſed; the meaning is, he will ſeverely puniſh him. The *Lord* will not hold him guiltleſs: *He* will take this cauſe into his own hands; being particularly, and, as it were, *perſonally* concerned in it.

The penalties appointed by human laws are not always inflicted; and in the caſe before us very rarely. Of a thouſand offenders, is there one brought before the magiſtrate? Or he, for one of his offences in a thouſand?

But the Divine Lawgiver, and Judge, who has annexed a peculiar threatening to this commandment,

mandment, is Himſelf, we ſhould conſider, a witneſs too of every violation of it. He bears indeed with our offences; yet he notes them: and though He be long ſuffering: He is alſo true and juſt, and will 'by no means clear the 'guilty.'

His ſentence is not executed ſpeedily; and may indeed, by timely repentance, be prevented: without this, the ſtroke, however ſlow, is inevitable. Delay is no ſecurity. On the contrary, the longer the Divine Patience ſpares us, ſo much the more heinous is our guilt, if we repent not; and the heavier muſt be our puniſhment. However free we may be from the dread of any human tribunal; however the Divine vengeance may ſlumber for a ſeaſon; it is impoſſible for us to eſcape, ſince He who cannot lie hath ſaid, 'The Lord will 'not hold him guiltleſs that taketh his name 'in vain.'

The time will come, when impious mirth will be turned into mourning; the laughter of ſcoffers into tears. Their profane oaths they will change into ſupplications, and prayers: which now indeed might be heard, but will be then too late. Or rather, ſince the day of Grace will be paſt, and even repentance be then in vain, they may *continue* the courſe they have now choſen: imprecations and blaſphemies may be ſtill their employment; deſpair their refuge; and accurſed ſpirits, whom they

they have reſembled on earth, be their companions and tormentors to all eternity.

SERMON VII.

FOURTH COMMANDMENT. PART I.

EXOD. xx. 8.

Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it Holy.

THE prodigious ſolemnity with which the *ten commandments* were delivered, from a mountain burning with fire, by the voice of God, gave them a diſtinction above the reſt of the Law of Moſes; though it was all derived from one fountain of wiſdom, and enjoined by the ſelf-ſame authority. The people of the Jews could not but pay a peculiar reſpect to precepts, uttered by the Almighty himſelf in their own ears: and their poſterity, and all men indeed, muſt be led to think, that theſe laws were not ſelected from the reſt, and accompanied with ſuch marks of honour, without ſome ſuperiour merit; but the obſervance of them muſt be either more eminently acceptable to the Supreme

preme Lawgiver, or, which is in reality the ſame, more neceſſary for the good of men.

The *ſubject matter* of theſe commands appears alſo upon examination to be anſwerable to ſuch expectations. They contain the great principles of human duty, the fundamental rules of religion and morality. Beſides the great authority impreſſed on them, there is an original, intrinſic value in all the laws which have found a place in that *literally* Divine compoſition, 'of which the tables were 'the work of God, and the writing was the 'writing of God.'

If there be any objection to this obſervation; any precept among this choſen number, that in it's own nature is not eſſential to religion and virtue, but owes all it's obligation to the revealed will of the Lawgiver, it it this, 'Remember that thou keep holy the ſabbath day. 'Six days ſhalt thou labour, and do all that 'thou haſt to do: but the ſeventh day is the 'Sabbath of the Lord thy God.'

In the ſtrictneſs, in which this precept was enjoined to the Jews, it is to be conſidered as making a part of their ritual law, and expiring with the commencement of Chriſtianity.

Amongſt all the diſcourſes of our Lord; and all the writings of his Apoſtles, in which the duties of men are raiſed to the higheſt pitch, and preſſed with the greateſt earneſtneſs; there is not to be found *one word* to recommend the ſtrict, or indeed *any* obſervance of the Sabbath.

Can it be ranked among the duties of Chriſtians?

Be it, that a regular ſyſtem of virtues is not deſigned to be drawn up in the New Teſtament; and that the Jews, in thoſe days at leaſt, were ſufficiently obſervant of the Sabbath: can we ſuppoſe that the *Gentile* converts, to whom ſo many of the Epiſtles are addreſſed, had been every where ſo well inſtructed in this duty, if it was a duty to them; and ſo thoroughly accuſtomed to the practice of it, as to ſtand in no further need of information or counſel?

Secondly, Several of the miracles and diſcourſes of our Lord tended plainly to diminiſh the veneration for the Sabbath; and, as it may be thought, to *prepare* the minds of men for the *abolition* or alteration of it. The Jews indeed were ſuperſtitious; to heal the ſick on *any* day, could never be a violation of a law of God: and it was a ſufficient anſwer to ſuch as thought otherwiſe, 'that the Sabbath was 'made for man.'

But our Lord did more than this. He commanded one perſon, whom he had juſt enabled to walk, to carry his bed along with him on that day; though it was expreſsly written in the prophet, that no burden ſhould be born upon the Sabbath. And when the Phariſees found fault with his diſciples for rubbing the ears of corn, he vindicates them by comparing the law of the Sabbath, to the Levitical rules concerning the *ſhewbread*, and *ſacrifice*. He repreſents ſome

ſome of the ceremonies attending their temple-worſhip, and the rite of circumciſion, as properly and reaſonably taking place of the reſpect due to the Sabbath, and excuſing the profanation of it: and adds, 'In this place is one 'greater than the Temple: The ſon of man is 'Lord even of the Sabbath day:' plainly declaring, that he had *power* to alter theſe legal inſtitutions; and intimating alſo perhaps, that he intended to *uſe* it.

But that the Jewiſh Sabbath is not now binding to Chriſtians, appears no where ſo plainly as in the *Epiſtles* of St. Paul.

'Now after that ye have known God, how 'turn ye again to the weak and beggarly ele-'ments, whereunto ye deſire again to be in 'bondage? Ye obſerve days, and months, and 'times, and years. I am afraid of you, leſt I 'have beſtowed upon you labour in vain.' And if you doubt what are the times and days he ſpeaks of in a manner ſo diſparaging, hear him again: 'Blotting out the hand writing of 'ordinances, that was againſt us, nailing it to 'his croſs.—Let no man therefore judge you in 'meat, or in drink, or in reſpect of an holy 'day, or of the new moon, or of the *Sabbath* 'days.'

Behold the great Apoſtle aſſerting the liberties of mankind, with an earneſtneſs ſuitable alike to the ſtrength of his genius, and the importance of his ſubject! as if he had ſaid,

"Theſe ritual ordinances were a burden upon us doubly grievous: the obſervance of

them was ſlavery, and diſobedience death. A law ſo voluminous and rigorous, muſt 'conclude all under ſin,' and be alike fatal to every man living; ſet up, like the hand writing upon the wall againſt the profane King, as it were on purpoſe to pronounce over our head the ſentence of condemnation. But thanks be to God in Jeſus Chriſt, it is at length extinct; dead in his death, never to revive more. Call us to no account henceforth on this antiquated ſubject, nor preſume to name to men the children's toys. We can yield to no intreaties, no authority, not even of the 'very chiefeſt of the 'Apoſtles,' in this capital cauſe; but ſtand faſt in our freedom, and refuſe utterly to wear again the yoke of bondage. The Jewiſh diſtinction of meats and days is at an end. 'To 'the pure all things are pure.' Chriſtians keep a continual feſtival of obedience and thankſgiving: God has granted us here a more valuable *reſt*, from the ceremonies of the Law, and the ſervitude of ſin; and has prepared for us an everlaſting *Sabbath*, which we ſhall celebrate with the ſaints and angels, and with himſelf in heaven."

If, after all, ſome of the firſt converts to Chriſtianity among the Jews, could not conquer all their prejudices at once, but had ſtill a leaning towards the Law; like the nation that, impatient of freedom, petitioned in form to be again ſlaves; the Apoſtle, for themſelves, has condeſcended to their requeſt: 'One man eſ-'teemeth one day above another; another eſ-

'teemeth

'teemeth every day alike.'—He has conſented, that they might be left to their own choice: 'and regard the day to the Lord; *or* not regard it,' and that alſo 'to the Lord;' with the ſame ſincere intention to pleaſe and honour him, and with the very ſame ſucceſs.

Weak and ſcrupulous minds might be allowed to ſatisfy themſelves, by retaining theſe remnants of the religion of times paſt; and the God of the ſpirits of all fleſh would behold their miſtake with pity, and their ſincerity with approbation: but perſons of more *knowledge*, and a *maturer age* in Chriſt, would eaſily perceive that they were ſet at liberty from ſuch ceremonies, and would be thankful for it; finding them now inſipid, and being deſirous of ſtronger food, of ſpiritual doctrines, and a more reaſonable ſervice; a worſhip, which they might be allowed to perform 'within the Veil,' approaching nearer to God's preſence, illuminated *more* fully by his Spirit, and partakers even of his 'Divine Nature.'

But though the *Sabbath*, in all it's ſtrictneſs, was a ritual inſtitution, *a ſign*, as it is written, between Almighty God and the children of Iſrael; the *ſeventh day* was *ſanctified* from the beginning of the world.

'Thus the heavens and the earth were 'finiſhed, and all the hoſt of them. And on 'the ſeventh day God ended his work which 'he had made: and he reſted on the ſeventh 'day from all his work which he had made. 'And God bleſſed the ſeventh day, and ſancti-

'fied

'fied it: becauſe that in it, he had reſted from 'all his work, which God created and made.'

How pleaſing is it to obſerve the divine ſimplicity of the moſt ancient, and yet unequalled hiſtorian! that perfect propriety, which is the genuine mark of Truth and Nature, and which Art cannot reach! 'And God bleſſed 'the ſeventh day, and ſanctified it.' This is all. Nothing more, you ſee, was originally enjoined to man than this, that he ſhould eſteem the ſeventh day 'bleſſed and ſanctified.' Not a word is added; not even that he ought to *reſt* from his labour on that day; though this is a circumſtance, to which the hiſtorian's attention, one would think, ſhould have been naturally led, by the reaſon which he himſelf adds: 'God bleſſed the ſeventh day, and ſanctified 'it; becauſe that in it he had reſted from all 'his work, which God created and made.'

When the precept was afterwards delivered to the Jews, it is expreſſed very differently: 'Six days ſhalt thou labour, and do all that 'thou haſt to do; but the ſeventh day is the 'Sabbath of the Lord thy God. In it thou 'ſhalt not do any work, thou, nor thy ſon, nor 'thy daughter, thy man ſervant, nor thy 'maid ſervant, nor thy cattle, nor thy ſtranger 'that is within thy gates.'

Here you obſerve, the ſeventh day is ſtyled a *Sabbath:* and this Idea of reſt from labour ſwallows up every other conſideration, and engroſſes the commandment.

Whatever

Whatever honour God commands to be paid to himſelf, it is all required for the ſake of the worſhipper. Reſt was now become a relief neceſſary to fallen man, condemned to 'eat bread 'in the ſweat of his face.'

But when the ſeventh day was firſt 'bleſſed 'and ſanctified,' he was not yet driven 'forth 'from the garden of Eden, to till the ground 'from whence he was taken;' nor that ground 'yet curſed, 'to bring forth thorns and thiſtles' to him. His daily taſk was pleaſure; exceeded only by the joy he felt at the weekly return of his thankſgivings.

Happy ſtate of innocence and eaſe, from which we fell in Adam!

But, 'as in Adam all die, even ſo in Chriſt 'ſhall all be made alive. There remaineth yet 'a reſt for the people of God.'

This life is to us the 'ſix days of labour,' and Heaven our everlaſting *Sabbath*. 'Let us 'labour therefore to enter into that reſt.'

Driven out from the ſeat of bliſs by cherubims and a flaming ſword, condemned to ſtruggle through the thorny wilderneſs of this world, and eat our bread 'in ſorrow till we return to 'duſt,' we yet look for a 'better country, that 'is an heavenly;' a happier Eden, gained by the ſecond Adam, and to be loſt no more. 'To 'him that overcometh will I give to eat of the 'tree of life, which is in the midſt of the Pa-'radiſe of God.'

SER-

SERMON VIII.

FOURTH COMMANDMENT. PART II.

REV. i. 10.

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day.

WHATEVER be our opinion concerning the *Sabbath*, ſuppoſe we were never bound to keep it, or are ſet free from it ever ſo fully; we may ſtill be ſubject to another appointment of a Nature ſo far ſimilar, as to contain that which was moſt valuable in the firſt. Our *Chriſtian Liberty* ſurely is not a freedom from the worſhip of Almighty God; nor from all external forms appertaining to it: ſince it cannot well ſubſiſt, and cannot at all be publick, without ſome of them.

Even we have a *ſacrifice* to offer, that of 'praiſe to God continually, the fruit of our 'lips, giving thanks to his name.'

We have that 'one ſacrifice, that was of-'fered for ſins for ever,' to commemorate, till he come again who offered it: 'This do in re-'membrance of me. Ye do ſhew the Lord's 'death till he come.'

'Circumciſion indeed is nothing, and uncir-'cumciſion is nothing, but the keeping of the 'commandments of God:' yet even Chriſtians have

have a command, not only to believe, but to *be* baptized 'in the name of the Lord.'

In like manner, 'although no man may 'now judge us, in reſpect of the' Sabbath; yet muſt we be very inattentive to overlook, and highly culpable if we diſregard, the great authorities on which the inſtitution of the *Lord's Day* is founded, and the many obligations we are under to the obſervance of it.

In the firſt place, this Feſtival hath been kept by the whole church of Chriſt, in all ages: It hath been obſerved in every nation where the goſpel hath been planted, and can be traced up to the firſt ſources of Chriſtianity. It's very *antiquity* muſt render it venerable. Is it not natural to regard with reſpect, that which hath received ſo much honour? Are we not afraid to violate what hath been always held ſacred? at leaſt, methinks, till we have well inquired whether the appointment, which has met with ſo general an approbation, were not built on great *authority*, or good *reaſons?*

We ſhall find, that it was founded upon *both.* There are not wanting paſſages even in the Scriptures, from which it may be inferred, that the religious celebration of the *Lord's Day* was ordered by the Apoſtles, and authoriſed by the miraculous preſence of our Lord himſelf.

'The ſame day at evening, being the *firſt* '*day* of the week, when the doors were ſhut 'where the diſciples were aſſembled, came *Je*-'*ſus*, and ſtood in the midſt, and ſaith unto 'them, Peace be unto you.'

'And

'And after eight days, again his disciples 'were within,—then came Jesus, and stood in 'the midst, and said, peace be unto you.'—I need not observe to you, that *after eight days*, in the language of Scripture, means on the same day of the *week* following.

Not only at Jerusalem; in other parts at a great distance, the first Christians, we find, had soon adopted this holy feast, in imitation of the example, or in conformity to the directions of those who had converted them; and employed it in the celebration of *publick worship*, and in acts of publick charity. 'We sailed away 'from Philippi,—and came unto them to 'Troas:—and upon the *first day* of the week, 'when the disciples came together to *break bread*, Paul *preached* unto them.'

'Now concerning the collection for the 'saints, as I have given order to the churches 'of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the *first* 'day of the week, let every one of you lay by 'him in store as God hath prospered him; that 'there be no gathering when I come.'

'I John was in the Isle that is called Pat-'mos, for the word of God, and for the testi-'mony of Jesus Christ: I was in the Spirit on 'the' Lord's Day. To whatever place the Apostles and first disciples of Christ went, or were driven by their enemies, they carried this rule of their religion along with them, to remember the Christian Sabbath: their Lord, in commemoration of whose resurrection they kept it, continued to follow them with tokens of

of his approbation and preſence; accepting the day, which they had dedicated to him, and had diſtinguiſhed by his name: 'I was in the Spirit 'on the Lord's Day.'

Nor is it of no moment, that the obſervance of the Lord's Day has the ſanction of *civil authority*. What though the penalties are not often exacted? Much guilt may be incurred, where there is little danger of puniſhment.

But the danger is not little: for to violate the juſt laws of the *community*, is an offence againſt *God*, the ſource of all power, the ſupreme Head of all magiſtrates; who is pleaſed alike, with the right uſe of the authority he hath delegated, and with a due ſubjection to it. *Him* at leaſt we cannot offend with impunity: and were it not that the Chriſtian Sabbath claims, as you have ſeen, an Original higher than human, there could be no inſtance in which we are more plainly bound to 'ſubmit to the or-'dinance of *man*, for the *Lord's* ſake.'

The inſtitution of this weekly feſtival, both as a day of devotion and of relief from labour, is evidently and greatly *beneficial*.

To what other cauſe can we aſcribe that degree of knowledge and civility found amongſt the vulgar? who make the bulk of mankind; and would make a greater, and a much worſe part of the world than they do, were it not for the obſervance of this or ſome ſuch feſtival.

It is an inſtitution much in favour of the *inferior* part of our ſpecies in another reſpect alſo; as it checks that inequality, which is perpetually

petually growing up among men; and which is uſeful indeed while confined within due bounds, but eaſily degenerates into Tyranny and Servitude; detrimental to both parties, and to the one ſurely the greateſt calamity on earth.

This day probably preſerves *Religion* in the world.

Without the aſſignment of ſome particular times either by authority or cuſtom for the worſhip of God, and the celebration of religious rites, it is not at all incredible that *Chriſtianity* itſelf, long before our days, and all knowledge, and *thought* even of a *Supreme Being* might have periſhed from the face of the earth.

Duties, which men are left at liberty to diſcharge at what time they pleaſe, ſoon come to be utterly neglected. Of all thoſe great numbers, who cannot be prevailed on to worſhip their Creator upon *the ſolemn day* ſet apart for that purpoſe, there are, we apprehend, exceedingly few, who find it more convenient to do it on *any other*.

No. Although we muſt acknowledge, that our places of public worſhip are found to contain ſome perhaps *hypocritical* perſons, who aim at no more than the ſhew of piety; crowds of *thoughtleſs* people, who come without any the leaſt deſign relative to piety; no ſmall number of *lukewarm* and irreſolute chriſtians, whoſe lives fall ſhort not only of their profeſſions, but of their own wiſhes and intentions: and in general too many wicked perſons of every claſs; who join no devotion to their prayers,

or

or no virtue to their devotion: yet, though multitudes of *bad* men be in the church, the *good* are *all* there. Rarely is it found, that thoſe who give not this ſpecimen of their piety, either ſhew their *religion* in other inſtances, or an eminent degree of virtue in *any*. Of all the motives to a good life, none comes up to the fear of God. The *morality*, that is univerſal and durable, ſprings from the root of *Religion*.

Poſſible it is, no doubt, to be too ſcrupulous in our regard to this or any other of the external forms of piety. But there is a great difference between a freedom from groundleſs anxiety, and an inſenſibility to religious impreſſions. Which latter, whether it be the greater fault or not, appears to be much the more common: and therefore it is more neceſſary to caution men againſt it, and to avoid it.

Whatever may be the caſe in other countries, or may have been even here formerly; in this nation, and in our days, *Superſtition*, however bad a thing, is not very terrible. The danger is almoſt wholly from *Irreligion*. There are vaſt *numbers* who abſent themſelves from the publick worſhip without any reaſon, for *one* who has good reaſon to be abſent, and yet attends it. Generally, when we neglect the Lord's Day, it is owing to ſome little call of buſineſs, or pleaſure, or perhaps to mere indolence; and not to the greater reſpect we have for any ſuperior duties. Theſe can be our excuſe only when we are employed in them.

What

What is it to us, that God 'will have mercy 'rather than ſacrifice,' when we give him neither?

Exact rules cannot be laid down concerning this, or many other things, ſo as to include all perſons and caſes.

I cannot preſume to preſcribe to another perſon, what *ſum* of money he ſhall give away in charity, or what *perſons* in particular he muſt make the objects of it: yet *alms giving* is nevertheleſs a neceſſary duty; and, as we may ſee by our Lord's account of the laſt Judgment, it will be fatal to have neglected it.

It will be hardly ſaid to me, that I am obliged to attend the public worſhip of God, every time when it is *poſſible*; or even always when I might do it without very conſiderable inconvenience. It muſt be left to myſelf to be the judge: and it may be difficult to cenſure me ſafely in any particular inſtance. And yet ſurely I may make myſelf highly culpable upon the whole. A *total* neglect is ſcarce conſiſtent with the bare *profeſſion* of Chriſtianity; and a backwardneſs in this attendance is a ſign of a cold regard to it's intereſts, and a ſlender proficiency in it's power and ſpirit.

Who will preſume to ſpecify what exerciſes, viſits, occupations, except thoſe prohibited by law, are inconſiſtent with the decent, godly, and reaſonable obſervance of the Lord's Day; or how great a portion of it every Chriſtian is bound to conſecrate to acts of piety, and employ in the publick or private duties of Religion?

gion? The determination, if it were made, would not be the ſame for all, nor for the ſame perſon upon all occaſions. And in any inſtance it would allow ſome latitude.

What may we hence infer? that there is nothing wrong? That we are at full liberty, with reſpect to this branch of our conduct, to act juſt as we ſhall think fit, or rather, as we may *fancy?* That engagements, at the beſt of no uſe, and amuſements hardly innocent upon any day, may yet engroſs and fill that time, which by the laws and cuſtoms of our country, and by the practice and injunctions of the chriſtian church, in all nations, and from the firſt ages of it, has been ſet apart, for the purpoſes of cultivating piety, and giving honour to Almighty God? If the Scriptures were ſilent; if there were no traces of this cuſtom in the practice of the Apoſtles, who indeed gave *all* their time to Religion, and *continued* daily 'with one accord in the temple;' I had almoſt added, if there were no Revealed Religion upon earth, this day is now, by ſo many reaſons, ſo long a preſcription, and for ſuch important purpoſes, appropriated and conſecrated to God, that it is a *ſacrilege* to *profane* it.

Let me juſt add, that to the inferior part of mankind this inſtitution of the Lord's Day, though intended even chiefly for *their* advantage, is moſt dangerous. In this it but reſembles many other means of grace, which being miſapplied, become pernicious. Some rich men, it is probable, had been happier if they had

had been born to labour: and the poor ſometimes find reaſon to wiſh, they had had *no day* at their own diſpoſal. Brought to the moſt deplorable end, and become examples and a ſpectacle for the good only of others, they have been heard to acknowledge, with their dying breath, that their firſt engagements in iniquity were contracted at a time when they were, too much, alas! for them, their own Maſters on the Lord's Day: they were corrupted, and undone by the abuſe of God's mercy, and the very means which he had appointed for their amendment and ſalvation.

SERMON IX.

Fifth Commandment. Part I.

EXOD. xx. 12.

Honour thy Father, and thy Mother: that thy Days may be long in the Land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

THERE is ſome diverſity, it ſeems, in the arrangement of the commandments. They are divided into *ten* after a different manner by *Catholics*

Catholics and *Proteſtants*; and diſtributed differently into *two tables* by *Jews* and *Chriſtians*. The order alſo of ſome of them is a little altered in the old Greek tranſlation. But in every diſtribution and diviſion, among the perſons of all perſuaſions, and in all languages, the precept now before us, 'Honour thy fa-'ther and thy mother,' is always ranked immediately after thoſe, which ſet forth our duty to Almighty God. The order in this inſtance is ſo natural and undeniable, that neither deſign, nor accident has ever diſturbed it. After that entire and boundleſs obedience and veneration due from all to God, the next degree of reſpect and reverence is that due from children to their parents.

The relation between the Creator and his creatures admits, in ſtrictneſs, of no compariſon; yet when He is pleaſed to repreſent himſelf to us under notions accommodated to our capacity, there is not any character He aſſumes more frequently or willingly, than this of a *parent*. No reſemblance can exactly ſet before us his nature or operations, what He is in himſelf, or what He is to us; but this, we may preſume, has in it the leaſt impropriety. He not only condeſcends to take the title, but claims, and as it were glories in it; calling at the ſame time for all thoſe ſentiments and returns from us, which are ſuitable to that relation.—'One God and Father of all.—God the 'Father, of whom are all things, and we in 'him.—We have had fathers of our fleſh,

'which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of Spirits?—A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master; if then I be a father, where is mine honour?'

What great respect must be due from us to that character, which the Supreme Nature has chosen to be the representation of his own! The authority of a father can be seen in no fairer view, than by this reflected light. When you look on the parental power, you behold the image of the *divine*.

Not that we are obliged to have recourse to *metaphors*, and oblique arguments, on this subject. The duty of children towards their parents is bound upon them by the most immediate and obvious, as well as the most powerful and indispensable obligations.

In the first place, here is the *command* of Almighty God: 'Honour thy father and thy mother.' What need of reasoning to evince our obligation? or what room for evasion, if we could be willing to disown it?

Secondly, The command is *express*. What we are to do in the other instances, is left to be inferred: and in direct terms we are only warned to avoid that, which is wrong. 'Thou 'shalt have no other Gods before me.—Thou 'shalt not make unto thee any graven image. '—Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord 'thy God in vain.'—And even the fourth commandment wears the same form of prohibition. 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it 'holy.'

'holy.'—How? 'in it thou ſhalt *not* do any 'work, thou, nor thy ſon, nor thy daughter.'—And ſo throughout the other table. In this inſtance alone, not content with his uſual ſtyle, the divine Lawgiver has added force to the precept, by a manner of ſpeaking more cogent, and poſitive: 'Honour thy father and thy mo-'ther.' Neglect in this caſe is againſt the very letter of the law; And he who does not *exert* himſelf in the keeping of this commandment, breaks it.

It is repeated alſo, and enforced in the *new Teſtament*. 'Children, obey your parents in 'all things; for this is well pleaſing unto the 'Lord.' Our Saviour has ſhewn great reſpect to this commandment, not only by obſerving it, being ſubject to his parents, the one of them only ſo *called*, and the other honoured above all human creatures in *being* ſo; but alſo reſtoring it, when it was degraded, to it's proper rank, and declaring it to be indiſpenſable. Alms to the poor, no doubt, are good; the ſupport of God's temple and worſhip was certainly acceptable to Him: but even ſuch valuable things as theſe, he has taught us, are to give place to others yet more neceſſary. 'God 'commanded, ſaying, honour thy father and 'mother: but ye ſay, whoſoever ſhall ſay to 'his father or mother, it is a gift by whatſoever 'thou mighteſt be profited by me;' that is, I have given to God what might have relieved my parents; 'and honour not his father or his 'mother, he ſhall be free. Thus have ye

'made the commandment of God of none ef-
'fect by your tradition.' Acts of charity and devotion are not well timed, when they obſtruct us in this duty. God will accept of nothing, till we have paid this neceſſary debt at home: and when we divert even to ſacred uſes what is required for the relief and comfort of a parent in want, the holy treaſury is defiled by our gifts, and loaths the offenſive offering.

But though Almighty God will not allow any honour offered to himſelf to excuſe the neglect of our parents; yet our kindneſs to them, will ſtand us in great ſtead, when He calls us to account for our forgetfulneſs of *Him*; and viſits us for our tranſgreſſions. 'Hear
'me your father, O children, and do thereafter
'that ye may be ſafe. For the Lord hath
'given the father honour over the children,
'and hath confirmed the authority of the mo-
'ther over the ſons. Whoſo honoureth his
'father maketh an atonement for his ſins: and
'he that honoureth his mother, is as one that
'layeth up treaſure.—My ſon, help thy father
'in his age, and grieve him not as long as he
'liveth. And if his underſtanding fail, have
'patience with him; and deſpiſe him not
'when thou art in thy full ſtrength. For the
'relieving of thy father ſhall not be forgotten:
—in the day of thine affliction it ſhall be re-
'membered; thy ſins alſo ſhall melt away, as
'the ice in the fair warm weather.'

But we are not left to rely wholly on the authority of the Son of *Sirach*, or of any *man*; God

God himſelf in the expreſs words of this commandment has been pleaſed to promiſe, that he will bleſs thoſe that keep it; and this in a manner peculiar and remarkable. 'Honour 'thy father and thy mother, that thy days may 'be long upon the land which the Lord thy 'God giveth thee.' The long and happy poſſeſſion of the land of Canaan, was the reward propoſed to the Jews for the keeping of *all* God's commandments. 'You ſhall walk in all 'the ways which the Lord your God hath 'commanded you; that ye may live, and that 'it may be well with you, and that ye may 'prolong your days in the land which ye ſhall 'poſſeſs.' And yet in the ſolemn delivery of the ten Commandments, the reward is not ſubjoined to the whole; but annexed, it ſeems, to *one* diſtinguiſhed precept: as if reſpect to this one of the divine laws had a ſuperior efficacy in drawing down that bleſſing, which indeed was only due to the obſervance of all.

Nor is this reward a conſideration of no weight even to *Chriſtians*.

Firſt, Children that obey their parents are the moſt likely to do well and proſper, to live long and happily, according to the *natural courſe* of things. The whole of life is apt to take it's colour from the employment of our youth; and that employment of it which is the moſt agreeable to our parents, will commonly be moſt to our advantage.

Secondly, St. Paul alleges as obligatory and yet in force this very commandment, with the

promiſe

promiſe annexed to it. 'Honour thy father 'and mother, which is the firſt commandment 'with promiſe, that it may be well with thee, 'and thou mayeſt live long upon the earth.'— Dutiful children may yet hope for the bleſſing of God even in this life: he ſtill interpoſes in favour of thoſe, who are obedient to this commandment.

Thirdly, Or ſuppoſe the rewards offered to Chriſtians were only the bleſſings of the *world to come*; the promiſe here ſubjoined to this commandment may ſtill be made uſe of, and applied with great juſtneſs for their encouragement. It is of no conſequence, to know what virtues are moſt acceptable in the ſight of God, becauſe He reſerves his recompence to the day of Judgment? If obedience to parents was entitled to an eminent ſhare of God's favour, when the tokens of it were temporal; may we not truſt, that he ſtill views this amiable virtue with the ſame eye; and will diſtinguiſh it in a proportionable degree, but with much greater honour, when he makes us citizens of the new *Jeruſalem*, and receives us into *ever laſting habitations?*

Laſtly, as the willing obſervance of this law is peculiarly pleaſing to Almighty God, ſo the violation of it is eminently offenſive to Him, and will be attended or followed by an exemplary vengeance.

According to the law of Moſes, to which our Saviour refers us, a ſignal outrage againſt parents was capital. 'God commanded, ſay-

'ing,

'ing, Honour thy father and mother: and he 'that curſeth father or mother, let him die the 'death.'

'If a man have a ſtubborn and rebellious 'ſon, which will not obey the voice of his fa- 'ther, or the voice of his mother, and that 'when they have chaſtened him, will not 'hearken unto them;—all the men of his 'city ſhall ſtone him with ſtones that he die: 'ſo ſhalt thou put evil away from among 'you.'

Juſt ſo in the caſe of 'idolatry *and* blaſ- 'phemy. If there be found among you man 'or woman, that hath gone and ſerved other 'Gods, and worſhipped them—thou ſhalt 'ſtone them with ſtones, till they die: ſo thou 'ſhalt put the evil away from among you. 'He that blaſphemeth the name of the Lord, 'ſhall ſurely be put to death, and all the con- 'gregation ſhall certainly ſtone him.'

And no wonder that the puniſhment is the ſame, when the offences are ſo much alike. 'He that forſaketh his father, is as a *blaſ- 'phemer*.'

St. Paul too ſeems to acknowledge the affi- nity between theſe two vices by his arrange- ment of the offenders, 'blaſphemers, diſobe- 'dient to Parents.'

Is there need of more? The command is expreſs; the ſanction great, on both ſides; the reward diſtinguiſhed; the condemnation dreadful, and yet equitable: The conſcience even of the tranſgreſſor cannot but approve of it.

it. He that is hard-hearted to him that begat and her that bare him, to whom will he be good? What crimes will he not in time commit, who begins with this? and what punishment may he not grow up to suffer? 'The eye that mocketh at his father, and de-'spiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the 'valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles 'shall eat it.'

And in fact, what confession is more just, or indeed more frequent, in those who are brought to an ignominious end, than this, That they begun their course of iniquity *at home*, in an obstinate ungovernable disposition, and disobedience to their parents? The progress after this was natural, through every vice to that fatal crime to be now expiated; and yet perhaps not expiated, even by their blood; through every danger to this awful moment, when they find Almighty God faithful at least in his threatenings. They are snatched away in the midst, in the beginning often of their days; gathering thus the first bitter fruits of disobedience, and looking for the full vintage hereafter in *eternal death*.

SER-

SERMON X.

FIFTH COMMANDMENT. PART II.

EPHES. vi. 1.

Children, obey your Parents in the Lord; for this is right.

AS the duty of Children to parents is enjoined in the cleareſt manner, and under the ſtrongeſt ſanctions by the *Law of God*; ſo it is alſo required by, what is indeed the Law of God too, the voice of *Nature, Reaſon,* and *Humanity.*

You obſerve how the young of *Animals* appear to be committed by *Nature* to the care and protection of their parents: They have continual recourſe to them in their wants and fears, and conform inſtantly to every intimation of ſuch lawful guides and governors. The parents accordingly, on the other hand, are in a moſt wonderful manner both diſpoſed to undertake this truſt, and enabled to execute it.

Theſe ties, we ſee, are firſt formed by the hand of nature: and the child, that endeavours to break looſe from this regular dependance and ſubjection, oppoſes the order inſtituted by providence, and the courſe of things. He can find no example in any other ſpecies, to countenance

tenance his unnatural wilfulneſs; and the voice of every creature upon earth cries out againſt him, and condemns him.

But *Reaſon* alſo in the Human ſpecies is on the ſame ſide, and ſtrengthens the ties of nature. Regard to the publick and our own welfare will preſcribe the ſame conduct, to which we are already prompted by prior motives: nor is this argument above the capacity of thoſe it is addreſſed to. Even a child may ſoon perceive ſo much, that he is not ſo *wiſe* as his parents: That if he follow his own fancy in oppoſition to their judgment, it is very likely, both that he will do miſchief, and have cauſe himſelf to repent it.

For, together with the ſuperiority of their underſtanding, he will obſerve alſo the tenderneſs of their affection. Their advice he muſt ſoon be ſenſible, is ſincere and honeſt and diſintereſted. His other Counſellors, (and his *paſſions* are to be reckoned among the number,) may be his enemies; and generally they are at beſt but *their own friends*. But his parents, he may be very ſure, will be faithful to him. Their's are the counſels of kindneſs, and their reproofs the effects, and very often the beſt tokens of it. There can be no difference between him and them, but about the means: the thing aimed at on both ſides is the ſame; it is his welfare, honour, and happineſs: They would be glad to gratify even his humour, but they prefer his laſting good. No other conſideration,

deration, but the view of his advantage, could prevail with them to offend him.

This affection which your parents bear towards you, and the great good they have done you in conſequence of it, give them ſtill another title to your conſideration and reſpect, a right to be regarded by you for *their own ſake*. And if in ſome inſtances you were perſuaded, and truly too, that their counſels were not the moſt advantageous, this would not immediately exempt you from all obligation to comply with them. Gratitude, and ſome tenderneſs ſurely on your part, in return for ſo much on their's, muſt be allowed to have weight, and come in to ſupply the place of more ſelfiſh conſiderations. Muſt your own ſatisfaction be the end of all your meaſures? or rather, cannot you receive ſatisfaction from the gratification of others? Will it afford you no pleaſure, to *give it* to your beſt friends and greateſt benefactors? You may part with ſomething, were it to the miſtakes of ſuch perſons; and exchange, with no great loſs, your own deſires for this pleaſure of *pleaſing*.

Conſcience, it is acknowledged, you are not to give up to any. Neither Father nor Mother muſt prevail with you to be wicked, and to diſobey your Creator. Nor will they tempt you to do it. The injunctions of Parents are of another Sort, the ſame with the commands of your heavenly Father; to be good Chriſtians, to be diligent, ſober, honeſt men. Lay aſide your apprehenſions: I take upon me to be

be reſponſible for it, that you will meet with little difficulty on this head; but have full ſcope to oblige and pleaſe both your Father and Mother, without the danger of violating any one of God's commandments.

If the two parents themſelves be *divided* in their ſentiments, the *preference* is due to him, to whom even the other parent is bound to be ſubject. But they are not apt to be divided, or miſtaken in theſe caſes; not in their *advice* to their children, however they may in their *own practice*. Even parents, who cannot prevail upon themſelves to be virtuous and good, would yet wiſh, and will kindly and wiſely exhort their children to deſerve that character. There is no envy in their hearts: they will be glad to ſee themſelves excelled by you as far as you pleaſe: and their advice will be ſafe, though their example may be dangerous.

Would then the power of parents, but for that one limitation, be abſolutely boundleſs? Is there nothing that can poſſibly be brought into competition with it, beſides the command of Almighty God? Can no *advantage* be ſo great, no inconvenience ſo preſſing, as to counterbalance it?

Before a child is yet arrived at the age of *diſcretion*, which he muſt be content to eſtimate by the *laws* and cuſtoms of his country; while he is in the family, or educated under the direction, and maintained by the ſubſtance of his parents, his obedience may be *unreſerved*. He can hardly exceed in it. Their authority

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is then at the higheſt; and then alſo of the greateſt neceſſity and uſe to him.

Afterwards, and always it will indeed be great, but not *abſolute*; and let me have leave to tell you, your reaſons and objections, whenever you diſpute it, ought to ſatisfy not only yourſelves, but wiſe and good men, diſintereſted, without prejudice, and well acquainted with both ſides of the queſtion. Otherwiſe, if you dare not, or if you *do not* adviſe with theſe, but think proper to conſult your own ſenſe only, the preſumption lies againſt you. Without entering into the particulars, it is probable you are in the wrong. There are a great many inſtances of undutiful behaviour and blameable diſobedience to parents, for one on the other hand, where their authority is patiently ſubmitted to, when it ought in reaſon to be rejected.

The caſe of all the moſt perplexing, as well as moſt frequent, is that of *marriage*.—If it be left to the diſcretion of every young man himſelf, as ſoon as ever he is of the legitimate age, (for till then we can give no ear at all to his pretenſions,) that *diſcretion* may but ill deſerve the name. His judgment will be apt to follow the verdict of his inclinations; the Fancy will raiſe a number of impregnable arguments, yielding to nothing but *Experience*: and this will come too late to be of uſe to him.—On the other hand, the reaſons of convenience, intereſt, and advancement, by which parents are often determined, though conſidera-

ble,

ble, do not seem to be decisive alone. Even the more important recommendations of character and temper, are yet hardly sufficient, except they receive some enforcement from the useful partiality of *affection*. This indeed may be *excited*, where it is not; and such amiable qualities are the most likely to excite it: it may also be *extinguished*, where it is; and *will* almost certainly for the want of them.

So that perhaps no general rule for this case will be binding in every instance. A kind Father will make great *condescensions*; a prudent child will be *cautious* how far he proceeds in such connections, without the approbation of his parents; and He is an obedient son indeed, and a pattern of filial duty, who sets the remembrance of benefits past above the expectation of pleasure to come, prefers the comfort and satisfaction of those to whom he has owed so much, before his own most impetuous desires, and gives freely to his *gratitude*, the triumph over his *love*.

The other instances of duty to parents will not be difficult, either to understand, or indeed to practise. The obligation is more evident and indisputable, and the performance easy, and pleasant. A respectful, and obliging, and kind behaviour towards them upon all *common occasions*, and in the course of your ordinary concerns and conversation, as it is plainly right, so will it be agreeable to the dictates of your own heart. You see it is the least that can be due;

due; and though you pay it, if it be with reluctance, it is some discredit to you.

But there may be two occasions, which however widely different, yet both call for the greatest degrees of this ceremonious attention, and the most studied respect. The *one* is, when some duty to God, or your country, or some private interest, plain, just, and no less important, interferes with your obedience. You are then to soften the asperity of what you *do*, by the gentlest *words*, and by all other honest means. Condescend to *request*, if that will help, even what is most *your own*. Accept as a token of favour what cannot be denied. Disapprove with great civility, or silence. When it is impossible to grant, it may yet not be necessary to refuse. But the practice of this part of your duty will hardly ever be called for, except perhaps sometimes in the case of a Parent's *second marriage*.

The *other* occasion, which, as I said, demands from you the greatest tokens of respect and tenderness in your behaviour to your parents, is when they labour under infirmities of body or mind, and in the time of their extreme old age. You will then double all your tender assiduity: you will watch their wishes, prevent their desires, catch every precious opportunity to be grateful with an eager sweet attention; of which you will give them a thousand little inestimable proofs, which words cannot teach; and not to know, is criminal; which require

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no capacity but that of *feeling*, and are to be underſtood in the *heart*.

I do not condeſcend to mention, that they may be in *want*: they muſt not be ſo, while you have any thing, though it were only *ſtrength* to maintain them by your labour.

But however affluent their fortunes, or liberal your ſupplies, they will always want, in that ſtate of old age and infirmity, an indulgence and care, which wealth cannot procure; and which, if it could, loſe all their value when they are purchaſed. They will look for tokens of your kindneſs, which can not be received from other hands. Their child is ſtill the comfort and delight of their dying eyes; and no other object pleaſing. You will be ready to anſwer ſuch demands: your heart will correſpond to theſe calls of nature. You will be proud of the humbleſt offices, and pleaſed with the moſt irkſome. They cannot give your patience more exerciſe, than you have given their's. They will not live to let you clear your obligations. Pay what you can, you will ſtill be debtors. Your felicity muſt be ſingular, or their diſtreſs, if you 'recompenſe 'them the things that they have done for 'you.'

It is written indeed in hiſtory, that one woman, when her aged father was confined in priſon, and like to die by famine there, obtained leave of his keepers to viſit him once a day, and ſuſtained him with her breaſt. Filial duty in this inſtance took the place of parental love, and

and taught her in his extremity to become a *mother* to him.

One writer ſeems to intimate, that this ſame old man, who had ſo much comfort in his daughter, had been a voluntary priſoner himſelf in his younger years for his father. How remarkable would be fulfilled the words of the wiſe Jewiſh writer? 'He that honoureth his 'father, ſhall have joy of his own children.'

SERMON XI.

FIFTH COMMANDMENT. PART III.

PROV. x. 1.

A Wiſe Son maketh a Glad Father.

THERE is no period of life, in which it is not better and happier to be wiſe and good, than profligate and wicked. For the reaſon, why God, who is love and goodneſs itſelf, requires any thing of us, is becauſe it is ſuitable to the nature he has given us, and *for our good.* This is the general ground of his commands. And if in any inſtances, it *ſeem* otherwiſe; it is not ſo in reality; our true good is not that,

which appears to us as such. In these cases, we are to rely on the providence and promises of God. 'Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake; shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life.'

But, though virtue is indeed always perfectly reasonable, yet it is most *amiable* in youth. It is ever, and in every one the object of our approbation; but then especially of our love.

Decency in men of years is no more, than what we look for; the payment as it were of a debt. We demand it, in return perhaps for that veneration and respect, which is given to age, and as the natural consequence of the wisdom taught by Time.

But when we behold in youth, the same degree of regularity and piety, which we are wont to expect only from the aged; when we see one, who is comparatively but a child, grown up to such a height of devout reverence for the Supreme Being, such prudent government of himself, and exact attention to all the rights and demands of other men, as are mostly the product, when they are produced at all, of long experience, and the labour of years; his excellent accomplishments are the more admirable for being less looked for; and the natural gracefulness of youth adds also something of it's own beauty, and reflects a lustre upon every virtue, with which itself is adorned.

Hardly

Hardly indeed does a late penitent give us, or himſelf, any good proof of the ſincerity of his repentance, and a true hearty attachment to the cauſe he has at laſt choſen. May we not ſurmiſe it poſſible, that no deſire of leading a holy life, but the viſible approach of death; not any love of God or goodneſs, but the fear of impending torment, has rouſed him for a moment from his lethargy, and awakened him to ſome little tranſient ſenſe of his condition? And that were the apprehenſion of danger removed, and his proſpect of life lengthened, he would return with greedineſs to the iniquities of his youth, and lay aſide his thoughts of religion and the grave together.

Far be it from a preacher of the goſpel to teach, that *any* Sinner, who comes to God with repentance and faith, can be rejected. But habits of evil, by length of time rooted deeply into our frame, are not to be torn from us without ſo many ſtruggles, and ſo much pain and trouble, as few or none, upon the trial, find themſelves willing to endure.

What ſpectacle more melancholy, than that of an old ſinner, at laſt ſmitten with remorſe? beginning to be ſenſible of the deformity and danger of the courſe of life he is in, yet unable almoſt, and not quite willing to forſake it; under a load that ſits heavy on him, with juſt perhaps the power, and not the reſolution to ſhake it off; fond of his old practices and companions, yet wiſhing a thouſand times he had never known them; and afraid of the conſe-

quence, which he is going forward ſtill to meet: how hard is repentance, but death is dreadful: *forgive*, he tries to ſay, and holds up his ſhaking hands towards heaven: *to be forgiven*, I muſt repent: to repent, is to offend no more, what pain ſoever it may coſt me, to repair all wrongs, reſtore unfair gains, be brought perhaps to want, expoſed perhaps to infamy. Alas! who that has done evil long, can at laſt repent worthily! how eaſy to *be* innocent! impoſſible to *become* ſo! how terrible is judgment! how bitter is a true and late repentance!

Poor, unhappy man! would you envy him his meditations? yet with theſe fruitleſs wiſhes, ineffectual efforts, diſtracted apprehenſions, many paſs into eternity, who might once have been eminent ſaints with a part of that ſelf denial, which now only diſturbs them in their ſins, and avails nothing to their ſalvation.

Theſe are the great arguments, it muſt be acknowledged, for an early piety; and they are ſufficient ſurely to recommend it to the choice of every young perſon, that will reflect upon them as he ought.

Yet there is ſtill remaining another motive beſides theſe; which, though comparatively ſmall, will have ſome weight, if they who have indeed caſt off the fear of God, have not loſt alſo the ſentiments and feelings of men, but remain ſtill open to the impreſſions of humanity and compaſſion. How happy for both parties! if ſome youth, careleſs, I confeſs, but perhaps not cruel, could be induced to do good to himſelf

himſelf for another's ſake, and enter immediately on a ſober and pious life, that his Father, or Mother, might have comfort in him: as it is written, 'A wiſe ſon maketh a glad father, 'but a fooliſh ſon is the heavineſs of his mo-'ther.'

It is a well known obſervation, that if you ſay of any perſon *he is ungrateful*, you give him the very worſt of characters. Whoever is without gratitude, is devoid of all virtue. If a man can be ſo inſenſible and mean, as to forget the law of kindneſs, and break through the ſtrong but liberal reſtraints of love, cunning he may be called, but can never be truly wiſe, or capable of any generous or virtuous action; and as little indeed of any real piety towards God, 'for he that loveth not his brother,' his benefactor, friend, father, 'whom he hath 'ſeen; how can he love God, whom he hath 'not ſeen?

Now we may venture to aſſert, that if a man has any well wiſhers, any benefactors on earth, to whom he is bound by indiſſoluble ties of gratitude, his parents are the perſons.

Indeed one is willing to think, that many of thoſe young people whoſe behaviour is ſo blameable, are not ſenſible of the uneaſineſs it occaſions, nor at all aware how much anguiſh is endured on their account.

They run heedleſsly forward in the broad and open path, and have no thought but of the pleaſure they are purſuing.

Yet

Yet ſtop, young man, we beg, a little, to look towards thy poor parents. Think it not too much to beſtow a moment's reflection upon thoſe, who never forget thee. Recollect what they have done for thee. Remember all—*all* indeed thou canſt not: alas! ill had been thy lot, had not their care of thee begun before thou couldeſt remember, or know any thing.

Now ſo proud, ſelf willed, inexorable, thou couldeſt then only aſk by wailing, and move them with thy tears. And they were moved. Their heart was touched with thy diſtreſs; they relieved and watched thy wants, before thou kneweſt thine own neceſſities or their kindneſs. They clothed thee; thou kneweſt not that thou waſt naked: thou aſkedſt not for bread; but they fed thee. And ever ſince, in ſhort, for the particulars are too many to be recounted, and too many ſurely to be all utterly forgotten, it has been the very principal endeavour, employment, and ſtudy of their lives to do ſervice to thee.

And remember, for this too is of moment, it is all out of pure unfeigned affection. Other friends moſtly expect their civilities to be repaid, and their kind offices returned with intereſt. But parents have no thoughts like theſe. They *ſeek not thine, but thee.* Their regard is real, and hearty, and undeſigning. They have no reflex views upon themſelves, no oblique glances towards their own intereſt. If by all their endeavours they can obtain their child's welfare, they arrive at the full accompliſhment of their

their wiſhes. They have no higher object of their ambition. Be thou but happy, and they are ſo.

And now tell me: is not ſomething to be done, I do not now ſay for thyſelf, but for them? If it be too much to deſire of thee to be good, and wiſe, and virtuous, and happy for thy own ſake; yet be happy for *their's*. Think that a ſober, upright, and let me add, religious life, beſides the bleſſings it will bring upon thy own head, will be a fountain of unfailing comfort to thy declining parents, and make the heart of the aged ſing for joy.

What ſhall we ſay? Which of theſe is happier? the Son, that maketh a glad Father? or the Father, bleſſed with ſuch a Son?

Fortunate young man! who haſt an heart open ſo early to virtuous delights; and canſt find thy own happineſs, in returning thy father's bleſſing upon his own head.

And happy father! whoſe years have been prolonged, not as it often happens, to ſee his comforts fall from him one after another, and to become at once old and deſtitute; but to taſte a new pleaſure, not to be found among the pleaſures of youth, reſerved for his age; to reap the harveſt of all his cares and labour in the duty, affection, and felicity of his dear child. His very look beſpeaks the inward ſatisfaction of his heart. The infirmities of age ſit light on him. He feels not the troubles of life: he ſmiles at the approach of death. Sees himſelf ſtill living and honoured in the memory

mory and the perſon of his ſon, his other, dearer ſelf; and paſſes down to the receptacle of all the living in the fulneſs of content and joy.

How unlike to this, is the condition of him, who has the affliction to be the father of a wicked offspring! Poor unhappy man! No ſorrow is like unto thy ſorrow. Diſeaſes and death are bleſſings, if compared with the anguiſh of thy heart, when thou ſeeſt thy deareſt children run heedleſsly headlong in the ways of ſin, forgetful of their parent's counſel, and their own happineſs. Unfortunate old man! How often does he wiſh, he had never been born, or had been cut off before he was a father! No reflection is able to afford him conſolation. He grows old betimes: and the afflictions of age are doubled on his head. In vain are inſtruments of pleaſure brought forth. His ſoul *refuſes* comfort. Every bleſſing of life is loſt upon Him. No ſucceſs is able to give him joy. His triumphs are like that of David: While his friends, captains, ſoldiers, were rending the air with the ſhouts of victory; he, poor conqueror! *went up*, as it is written, 'to the chamber over the gate, and wept: 'And as he went, thus he ſaid; O my ſon Ab-'ſalom! my ſon, my ſon Abſalom! Would 'God I had died for thee! O Abſalom, my 'ſon, my ſon!

SER-

SERMON XII.

Fifth Commandment. Part IV.

EPHES. vi. 4.

And ye Fathers, provoke not your Children to Wrath; but bring them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord.

A Barbarous cuſtom prevailed once even among the Greek nations, that whenever the parents of a child were unwilling to be troubled with the care of bringing him up, they took, and *expoſed* him, as the phraſe was; laid and left him, as ſoon as he was born, in ſome diſtant ſolitary place, to die by famine, or be torn in pieces by wild beaſts.

Sometimes it happened, that a traveller having loſt his road, or a ſportſman in purſuit of game, paſſed that way, took up the infant, and maintained him with his own. 'Which now 'of theſe two,' to imitate a queſtion of our Lord, 'think ye, was father to the expoſed 'child? He *ſurely* that ſhewed mercy on him.' The other deſerved not the name, nor can claim the rights of a parent: He was rather a murderer. And if the laws of his country protected him from puniſhment, and the cuſtoms of thoſe times from ſhame; yet by no law certainly of reaſon or religion, can he ever demand

mand duty from this ſon: but is to be excepted out of the number of thoſe parents, concerning whom it is commanded, 'Honour thy father and thy mother.'

Power and prerogatives are for the benefit of the *poſſeſſor* only in the *ſecond* place. The good of thoſe who are governed, the ſervice of the public, is the *principal* thing intended. This authority of parents, among the reſt, as it is ſo conſiderable, is charged with a proportionable load of obligations; and muſt be ſupported by benefits, or at leaſt by kindneſs, which is a diſpoſition to confer them.

Indeed to do them juſtice, Parents are not commonly deficient in this diſpoſition. They ſhould love their children, no doubt; but they do ſo, and there is no occaſion in general to remind them of it. I do not remember, that this duty is commanded any where in the whole compaſs of the Scriptures. Is it therefore unneceſſary? God forbid. If any parent ſhould feel in his heart, that he is without ſo natural an affection; he ought, (and this is the meaning of all other precepts to love any one,) to acquire and cultivate it by all the ways he can, and eſpecially by *acting* as if he *poſſeſſed* it.

But Parents do not ſo often want kindneſs, as diſcretion and judgment in the direction of it.

Sometimes they let their love for their children become *too ſtrong*. And then, as it is very *painful* to themſelves; ſo it is not for that reaſon

ſon the more *uſeful*, or even *acceptable* to the perſon who is the object of it. But rather it is apt to do harm, and create diſguſt; and becomes in both theſe reſpects, like any other *immoderate affection*, the cauſe of it's own diſappointment.

A child certainly has a right to be beloved: and it ſeems prudent, as it is natural and delightful, to let him underſtand that he is ſo; to the end that *his* heart too may be touched, that he may be influenced in his behaviour towards you by the beſt and moſt pleaſing motive, and may rely always with entire confidence on your good intentions towards him.

But ſtill it may not be adviſable to make him too ſenſible of his power, leſt he ſhould be tempted to abuſe it. When you have ſuffered him upon a few trials to carry off the victory, againſt all reaſon, merely by his importunity; innocent and harmleſs as you think him, he will feel his own importance, and with a wanton frowardneſs have recourſe to it continually; imperious in his illegitimate authority; a *tyrant*, as well as an *uſurper*. Till at laſt, not wholly without cauſe, though with prodigious ingratitude, he may impute to you all the calamities that follow; upbraiding you with your exceſs of tenderneſs, and lamenting in his greateſt miſery, not ſo much his own obſtinate ungovernable paſſions, as the weak and fatal condeſcenſion of you, who ſhould have ruled him.

But

But though reſtraint and *diſcipline* be abſolutely neceſſary for all young perſons without exception, yet the ſame diſcipline will not be proper for all. It is to be accommodated in the degree, and duration, to their diſpoſition, age, ſex, and other conſiderations. All the hardſhips and refuſals they are obliged to ſubmit to, not only muſt be neceſſary for ſome good end, but ſhould appear to be ſo, if poſſible, to themſelves. Ruled they muſt be, or they are ruined; but it ſhould be by reaſon. Paſſion muſt ſhew itſelf with an ill grace, and ill effect, in the cultivation of morals; which conſiſts ſo very much in the reſtraint and government of the paſſions.

Correction is a part of diſcipline, and comes under the ſame rules. Solomon has expreſſed the neceſſity of it in ſtrong terms: 'He that 'ſpareth the rod, hateth his ſon.' But though you have recourſe ſometimes even to this token of your diſpleaſure; it will be with moderation, with temper, after the ineffectual uſe of other applications, and with a real, and an apparent unwillingneſs.

As paſſion is improper in the government of children, ſo is *partiality*. It is obſerved of ſome parents, that they divide their kindneſs with a very unequal hand, treating their children with a groundleſs and diſagreeable diſtinction: inſomuch that of the one parent it is become almoſt a proverbial ſaying, that the 'worſt ſon is the favourite.' It will not however follow, that he has the beſt uſage: Indulgence

dulgence may not prove ſo. But this cenſure of the partiality of the mother is perhaps rather ſevere: for if to an equal ſtock of original affection for all her ſons, you add, what is ſo nearly akin to love, pity, of which profligate children will be often the proper objects; and fear, which they will always excite; what wonder that the ſenſation is quickened; and ſuch tokens of tenderneſs diſcovered, as are only to be drawn forth by calamities and danger?

The *maintenance* of children is to be ſuited to the ſtation they are likely to appear in, and the abilities of the parents. There is a fault both in the exceſs and defect; and the conſequences of either, may be bad. Yet the rich, methinks, ſhould not be excuſed from ſome good degree of bodily exerciſe, if their conſtitution will bear it; nor the pooreſt left utterly without all learning, if their capacity will receive it.

I muſt not omit, that the fear of God, and ſome inſtruction in the Chriſtian Religion, a regard to truth and honeſty, and a habit of diligence, are indiſpenſably neceſſary to all, even the pooreſt children; and I could add, I doubt, that they are very little taught them.

For the *diſtribution* of your *ſubſtance* you are not to be called to account too ſtrictly: What you have to leave behind you, is not to be demanded even by your children as a debt; that part eſpecially, which is of your own acquiſition. You will conſider however the *cuſtoms*,

as

as well as laws of your country; what will be generally *thought right*, and what yourſelves ſhall be likely to approve at your laſt hour, that your own heart may not then condemn you.

Yet is it not intended to counſel you to an immediate and final diſpoſal of what you have, even to your children: It is one thing to *arrange*, and another to *alienate*. This latter is not generally thought adviſable. Gratitude is not found ſo ſtrong a principle, as expectation. And the parent, that would be ſure of his children's obedience, muſt not only have been very kind to them, but keep it in his power to be ſo ſtill. The wiſe ſon of Sirach is uncommonly earneſt upon this head. 'Hear me, O 'ye great men of the people, and hearken 'with your ears, ye rulers of the congrega-'tion.'—What is it, that he would introduce with ſo much ſolemnity; commanding thoſe in authority, and teaching the teachers of mankind?—'Give not thy ſon, and wife, thy 'brother, and friend, power over thee while 'thou liveſt: and give not thy goods to ano-'ther; leſt it repent thee, and thou intreat 'for the ſame again. As long as thou liveſt, 'and haſt breath in thee, give not thy ſelf over 'to any.'

Yet there is an error on the other ſide. As liberality without meaſure may be imprudent, extreme parſimony would be cruel. Too great a depreſſion of thoſe whom you muſt advance at your death, will ſpoil both the grace and value of your gift; making your heirs unhappy,

py, firſt in the tedious expectation, and then in the aukward poſſeſſion of a fortune they were never taught to uſe, or to *enjoy*.

Nor ſons alone, but daughters, by ſuch ill-judged œconomy, have been greatly injured; and have taken a *dangerous revenge*. They cannot indeed be juſtified; but neither are you excuſable. And you ſhould remember, that as you are joined in the blame, you will find yourſelves certainly to *partake* in the conſequences, whatever they be. Beſides the diſhonour, the diſtreſs will always reach you. Your happineſs is involved in their's: You ſail on the ſame bottom. And whatever you *acquire*, or *keep*, you may appear ſplendid, and be called fortunate: but you will never be happy, while you have children that are miſerable and infamous.

But if, on the contrary, by your attention, and encouragement, by a ſuitable education, and a conſtant kindneſs tempered, or rather heightened by diſcretion, you can, with God's bleſſing, make them good; in the firſt place, you will do *them* the greateſt ſervice that is poſſible; ſecondly, you will diſcharge your own *conſcience*, and acquit yourſelves faithfully of the great truſt repoſed in you by Providence; and laſtly, you will reap your *reward* in their merit, and feel the comfort of all their happineſs, both in this world, and that which is to come. Beſides the many inſtances of gratitude and affection to be expected from ſuch children, which may prove to be uſeful, and will

will always be pleaſing; you will participate of all their welfare, reflected, as it were, into your own boſom; as your kindneſs laid the foundation of their felicity, the influence is reciprocal; and their virtues, and thoſe of their children after them, will to you be matter of conſtant and growing ſatisfaction. 'Children's 'children are the crown of old men: and the 'glory of children are their fathers.'

There is yet one thing more you are to provide for your children, which muſt not be overlooked; itſelf one of the moſt efficacious means of doing them ſervice; and ſuch as may be properly joined with every other inſtance of your attention and tenderneſs: I mean the ſilent but perſuaſive admonition of your own virtuous life, and good example. With what face, or with what ſucceſs, can any one reprimand his family for irregularities, which he commits; or exhort to virtues, that he only talks of? Parents, we ſee, have an additional reaſon to be religious and exemplary, over and above the motives that are common to all chriſtians. They cannot do themſelves miſchief, without great hazard to thoſe whom they have brought into the world. Teſtify your affection for your children, in the moſt important inſtance both to yourſelves, and them. Go before them in every thing that is good: Inſtruct, and lead them too, in the way to heaven. Though poor, you will give them a noble fortune, if you teach them to be good chriſtians. Your example may be better to them,

them, than any eſtate. But what amends will you make them, by all the kindneſs you can ſhew, or the poſſeſſions you may provide, if it ſhould be owing to you, that they are cut off at laſt from the inheritance of the ſaints in light, and condemned to have their portion for ever, 'where ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of 'teeth?'

SERMON XIII.

Fifth Commandment. Part V.

COLOS. iii. 22.

Servants, obey in all things your Maſters according to the Fleſh; not with eye ſervice, as Men pleaſers, but in ſingleneſs of Heart, fearing God.

THE Ten Commandments are delivered, moſt of them, in few words, with a dignity ſuited to the authority by which they are enjoined, and a ſimplicity anſwerable to the manners of that age when they were ſpoken. The great capital duties of religion and morality are

ſingled out and commanded, or rather the *violation* of them is *forbidden* in plain and general terms. A fair and honeſt mind is the beſt of all interpreters. He who applies himſelf to the keeping of theſe few commands with ſuch a diſpoſition, will not be 'far from the kingdom of God.' To perſons of a captious and corrupt temper, no words are ſufficient; the prohibition never reaches their caſe; the command is never binding to them: the whole volume of the ſcriptures, and all the writings of all the moraliſts in the world, are too little to enforce a virtue on a depraved heart, and explain what men *will not* underſtand.

There are two or three duties, which I would throw together here, and make the ſubject of one diſcourſe. They are of importance, and one or other of them makes part of the duty of moſt perſons: it is of little conſequence under what head they are arranged, provided they be well underſtood and practiſed.

It is written, 'Children, obey your parents 'in all things:' in like manner, and the ſame words, 'Servants, obey in all things your maſ'ters;' it follows, 'not with eye ſervice as 'men pleaſers, but in ſingleneſs of heart, fear'ing God: knowing, that of the Lord ye ſhall 'receive the reward of the inheritance.' *Obedience* and *fidelity* conſtitute a great part of what is due from a ſervant; and they are evidently due: obedience is immediately implied in the relation of a *ſervant*; and fidelity ſhould accompany all the intercourſe between *man* and

and *man*. They are plainly reaſonable and right; and therefore well pleaſing to God, as the diſcharge of filial duty is: Secondly, they are as plainly required by him; and ſo may be advanced at the ſame time into an obedience to *God* alſo: and Thirdly, He promiſes, we ſee, himſelf to repay this ſervice, as well as the other of children to their parents, both liberally, and in a way peculiarly ſuitable: 'Ye 'ſhall receive the reward of the' inheritance.

Your recompence for being good ſervants to men, will be, that you ſhall become the *children* of God. He will look upon you as his ſons: You ſhall be adopted into his family, and made heirs of his heavenly kingdom. 'For 'there is no reſpect of perſons with him: He 'is the ſame Lord over all.' In his eye there is no diſtinction: 'There is neither bond nor 'free: He that is called in the Lord, being a 'ſervant, is the Lord's freeman: likewiſe alſo 'he that is called being free, is Chriſt's ſer-'vant.' The higheſt angels in heaven are God's miniſters and meſſengers, and are glorious and happy in their obedience: and the very meaneſt of the ſons of men, if not wanting in the duties of their preſent ſtation, whatever it be, ſhall be advanced to the ſame likeneſs; for 'They are equal unto the An-'gels, and are the children of God, being the 'children of the reſurrection.' The loweſt offices become the ſteps of our higheſt advancement. Every ſtation is holy, that is filled by a devout perſon. He who doth 'ſervice as unto

'the Lord,' is as he that miniſtereth at the altar. Though your time and hands are taken up, more perhaps than they ſhould be, by a hard maſter, you have your hearts and affections free. Love God, and keep his commandments, and your lot is to be envied. 'There is reſerved in heaven for you, an in-'heritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that 'fadeth not away.'

'Servants, be ſubject to your maſters with 'all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but 'alſo to the froward. For this is thank wor-'thy, if a man for conſcience toward God en-'dure grief, ſuffering wrongfully.' There is indeed no ſtation of life, in which the virtue of *patience* will not be much wanted. It is very neceſſary, both for ſervants and maſters: though the former are called to exerciſe it in a peculiar manner. But ſtill there are two conſiderations, that will make ſome difference in this duty.

Firſt, Servants are of different *degrees:* ſome of them are entertained for particular purpoſes, expreſſed, or well underſtood on both ſides; and if they anſwer theſe purpoſes fairly, and honeſtly, they have diſcharged the duty of their ſervice.

Secondly, No ſervants now among us are in the ſame condition, that ſervants were in formerly; and particularly, when the Scriptures were written; for thoſe were *ſlaves*, and the word might properly be tranſlated ſo. And therefore, though ſervants are obliged, no doubt,

doubt, ſtill, and as much as ever they were, to be faithful and honeſt, 'not purloining, but 'ſhewing all good fidelity;' yet they are not bound to all the ſame things, nor for the ſame time. With us, they moſtly *hire themſelves*; and it is to *ſervice*, not *ſervitude*. By the law of the land, they are not ſlaves; and there is no Chriſtian law, that obliges them to become ſuch. 'Art thou called being a ſervant,' or ſlave? 'care not for it; but if thou mayeſt be 'made free, uſe it rather.'

It is both prudent and right in ſervants to be *reſpectful* alſo, as well as honeſt. Wiſe and Chriſtian counſel is that, which is given them by the Apoſtle, if they can 'to pleaſe their 'own maſters well in all things, not anſwering 'again'—without murmurings, complaints, reluctance, which make their ſervice more painful and leſs acceptable. Yet in theſe countries, where they ſerve only upon agreement, they may certainly inſiſt upon the *conditions* of it.

And though they are obliged by all the ties of reaſon, and religion, and their own intereſt to *behave* themſelves *well* in their ſervice; it may be, they are bound by none of theſe to *continue* in it: and, excepting only the caſe of contracts for a *fixed time*, and ſome little reſtraints alſo which are eſtabliſhed by *cuſtom*, when they judge that they can be treated with more kindneſs, or receive a better recompence from a *new maſter*, or in another *ſtation*, they are at liberty to try. Conſcience towards God does

does not oblige them to *ſuffer* thus *wrongfully*: the counſels ſuggeſted by prudence, may be followed with innocence.

And ye, maſters, 'do the ſame thing unto 'them;'—that is, act in the ſame reaſonable and religious manner; be as conſiderate and equitable, as you expect them to be reſpectful and honeſt; in one word, be ſuch maſters, as you would wiſh to meet with, if you were ſervants. *Forbearing threatening:* It is a ſign you want ſkill in the art of governing, if you have much occaſion for ſeverity; and you muſt want both religion and humanity, if you uſe it when it is not neceſſary. Take care that none of the offences you would correct, nor any other, be any way owing to yourſelves; be not partakers of their ſins, by giving them encouragement or provocation to commit them, or ſetting an example of them; 'Knowing 'that your maſter alſo is in heaven.'—*Knowing* this; you need not have recourſe to imagination, to make you ſee what is reaſonable in this caſe, and induce you to do, as 'you 'would be done to.' The ſuppoſition that you too are ſervants, is very true: You have a maſter, as well as they, and the ſame that they have; who will deal fairly by you both, according to your merit and not rank: and a very conſiderable part of your merit will conſiſt in your good behaviour to them. You ſhall meet from God with the mercy you ſhew; at the time when you will want it. But if you be injurious and oppreſſive, if you be lordly, and

and inſolent, and inhuman; it had been better you had been born to beg, or that you had never been born. Your dead body will be buried with a little more ceremony than their's; and there ends all your glory: The grave is the concluding ſcene of earthly greatneſs: 'The 'rich man died, and was buried.' Then a different proſpect opens: 'And in hell he lift 'up his eyes, being in torments, and ſeeth 'Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his boſom.' There will be an exchange of ſtation in the world to come: 'Many that are firſt, ſhall be 'laſt; and the laſt, firſt.'

Princes, *Magiſtrates*, *Superiors* of every ſort, have a right to reſpect and honour, and to obedience, according to their place, and their relation to us, and the laws of that civil ſociety in which we live. Theſe duties, reſembling ſo nearly what we owe to our parents, rank eaſily under the ſame rule. The relation has been often expreſſed by the ſame name; and the obligations are ſimilar. 'Moſes ſaid unto 'the Lord, wherefore haſt thou afflicted thy 'ſervant, that thou layeſt the burden of all 'this people upon me? have I conceived all 'this people; have I begotten them, that thou 'ſhouldeſt ſay unto me, Carry them in thy bo- 'ſom, as a nurſing father beareth the ſucking 'child?' The *ſenators* of Rome were always addreſſed by the name of *Fathers:* and the *Emperors* did more frequently receive, than deſerve, the title of *the fathers of their country*. Chriſtianity makes no alteration in theſe duties,

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on either ſide; but only enforces them more ſtrongly; and diſpoſes men better to the diſcharge of them; by turning their thoughts from thoſe objects, which occaſion competitions and jealouſies among worldly minded perſons, 'to the city of the living God, the 'heavenly Jeruſalem, to an innumerable com-'pany of Angels, to the general aſſembly and 'church of the firſt born, which are written 'in heaven, and to God the judge of all.'

Even *age* alone gives a kind of ſuperiority; and, as ſome little balance to many diſadvantages, carries an allowed claim to reſpect. 'Pharaoh ſaid unto Jacob, How old art thou? 'And Jacob ſaid, The days of the years of my 'pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: 'And Jacob bleſſed Pharaoh.' And 'without 'all contradiction,' as the Apoſtle argues, 'the 'leſs is bleſſed of the better. Thou ſhalt riſe 'up', ſays the law of Moſes, 'before the 'hoary head, and honour the face of the old 'man.' The Apoſtle Peter commands, 'ye 'younger, ſubmit yourſelves unto the elder.' And the Roman Poet tells us, that in the virtuous times of that common-wealth, it would have been eſteemed a capital crime not to riſe up with reverence to an aged perſon.

Laſtly, there is alſo a reſpect and reverence due, as well as maintenance, to the miniſters of the church. *Miniſters* they call themſelves, and they are willing to *be:* not only the miniſters of God, as magiſtrates are ſtyled, but even 'your ſervants alſo for Jeſus' ſake.' But the people,

people, on the other hand, will look upon them, as indeed they are named in Scripture, as *rulers* and *fathers*.—This is a ſubject, which appears to diſadvantage in our hands. Let this be the only competition between us, who ſhall be the moſt ſubmiſſive, and moſt ſerviceable. 'Yea, all of you be ſubject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God reſiſteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.'

SERMON XIV.

SIXTH COMMANDMENT. PART I.

EXOD. XX. 13.

Thou ſhalt not Kill.

'WHERE no law is, there is no tranſgreſſion: For ſin is the tranſgreſſion of the law.' But it is by no means neceſſary, that this law ſhould be pronounced in audible ſounds by the mouth of God, or engraved in ſtone by his finger. It may be woven into the frame of our nature, and written 'in fleſhly tables of the heart;' as many of God's laws, which

which are alſo commanded in Scripture, evidently are: and theſe are binding to men of all nations, and in every age. The ancient patriarchs, ſo far as they were not taught by revelation, and other perſons before the law of Moſes was delivered, and the Gentiles to whom it was not given, 'were a law unto themſelves:' the law was legible in their hearts; and according as they obſerved or tranſgreſſed it, their own conſcience acquitted or condemned them.

Take for an example the firſt ſin, of which we have any account, after the fall, committed by the very firſt man born into the world, and no leſs a ſin than the murder of his brother. How quick is the progreſs man is able to make in evil! mature in the infancy of the world, and advanced to the utmoſt pitch of guilt in his very firſt efforts! Not, however, without ſome ſentiments of ſhame, and an inward natural ſenſe of the authority of the law, though it was not yet either pronounced, or written.

To *Adam* indeed it was ſaid, 'Of the tree of 'the knowledge of good and evil, thou ſhalt 'not eat of it.' The prohibition was plain; and if the criminals endeavoured to hide themſelves among the trees, their *ignorance* may be wondered at, but their *confuſion* was natural.

Murder was not forbidden, till after it had been committed. God had never ſaid to *Cain*, as far as we know, 'Thou ſhalt not kill:' Yet was he very ſenſible, he had done wrong; and he

he prevaricates, diſſembles, and denies it, with a mixture of meanneſs and inſolence, the natural attendants of conſcious guilt. 'Where 'is Abel thy brother? I know not: am I my 'brother's keeper?'

There ſeems to have been another murder committed, before there was a law againſt it. And in that inſtance alſo, the criminal was ſenſible he had done amiſs; and appears to feel and ſuffer the very ſtroke which he had given. 'Hear my voice, ye wives of Lamech, hark-'en unto my ſpeech; for I have ſlain a man to '*my wounding*, and a young man to my hurt.'

Immediately after the *flood*, the law againſt murder was delivered *expreſsly*, with the penalty of death annexed to it. And the ſixth of the ten commandments is but a repetition, or rather an epitome of that original law, which was given to Noah and his ſons; and in them to all the world. 'Whoſo ſheddeth man's 'blood, by man ſhall his blood be ſhed; for in 'the image of God made he man.'

'God is a ſpirit; and a ſpirit hath not fleſh 'and bones.' So far we have the words of our Lord for our guide. Hence we learn, that this *image* of God which is in man, doth not conſiſt in the *form* of his *body*, nor any property of bones and fleſh. 'Take ye therefore good 'heed unto yourſelves, for ye ſaw no manner 'of ſimilitude on the day that the Lord ſpake 'unto you; leſt ye corrupt yourſelves, and 'make you a graven image, the ſimilitude of 'any figure, the likeneſs of male or female.'

Neither

Neither can this *image of God* in man, conſiſt in any *original*, but now no longer exiſting qualities of mind, which Adam might poſſeſs *before* the fall, and loſe with his innocence; ſince we find it is ſtill, even after the flood, aſſigned as a reaſon againſt murder, or an argument of the great guilt of it. 'Surely your 'blood of your lives will I require: at the hand 'of every man's brother will I require the life 'of man. Whoſo ſheddeth man's blood, by 'man ſhall his blood be ſhed; for in the image 'of God made he man.' If this image, whatever it be, were extinct and loſt, it could no longer be defaced; and conſequently could not now be brought in to conſtitute, or aggravate the guilt of murder.

Yet it appears to be ſomething, which is *not* in *other creatures*. Of all the animals upon earth, it is in *man alone*. This may be gathered from the manner in which this expreſſion is introduced, both in the hiſtory of the creation, and after the flood. 'And God made the beaſt 'of the earth after his kind, and cattle after 'their kind, and every thing that creepeth 'upon the earth after his kind: And God 'ſaid, Let us make *man* in *our image*, after 'our likeneſs: and let them have dominion 'over the fiſh of the ſea, and over the fowl of 'the air, and over the cattle, and over all the 'earth.—And God bleſſed Noah and his ſons, 'and ſaid; The fear of you, and the dread of 'you, ſhall be upon every beaſt of the earth, 'and fowl of the air; into your hand are they delivered:

'delivered: every moving thing that liveth, 'ſhall be meat for you. And ſurely your blood 'of your lives will I require; at the hand of 'every beaſt will I require it, and at the hand 'of man: whoſo ſheddeth man's blood, by 'man ſhall his blood be ſhed: for in the image 'of God made he man.'

The ſum of theſe three obſervations amounts only to this, That the *Divine Image* in man, is to be looked for among the *endowments* of *mind*, now *exiſting* in the human race, and *not* poſſeſſed by the *brute* creation.

Now in which of them ſoever this reſemblance lies, or be it that it conſiſts in more particulars than one; whether it be placed in the *reaſon* of man, which raiſes him ſo much above the other creatures, and has been called even by heathens a *ray of the Divinity*; or in the neceſſary conſequence of that reaſon, *conſcience*, the perception of moral differences, the power of diſcerning what is right and wrong, a faculty, among all the creatures on earth, peculiar to man alone; or were it to conſiſt in the *dominion*, delegated to him by God over the earth and it's inhabitants, and poſſeſſed in a conſiderable degree by means of his ſuperior underſtanding; let this Divine Image be placed in which of theſe particulars you pleaſe, or all of them together, it will ſtill conſtitute, ſo long as it is ſtill ſubſiſting, a juſt argument againſt the commiſſion of murder. The guilt is increaſed by this conſideration; and the injury done to *man*, becomes alſo impiety againſt

againſt *God*. He who defaces the copy, would attack the original, we may preſume, were it placed within his reach: and it is not right, but power only that protects even the omnipotent upon his throne, when his repreſentative is aſſaulted with ſuch audacious and profane outrage. Every ſin is a violation of God's law, an act of diſobedience to the Supreme Lawgiver; but this is an offence that approaches nearer to him, and becomes, as it were, a *perſonal* indignity.

The injury which is done to *man* by the ſin of murder, is of the largeſt ſize; and in this reſpect too, the horrid crime before us has many great, and ſome peculiar aggravations.

In the firſt place, it is an offence againſt the *ſtate*. The loſs of a citizen is a misfortune to the publick: the riches, ſtrength, and glory of a prince conſiſt in the number of his ſubjects: and is it a wonder, if he is the moſt implacable in his reſentment againſt thoſe, who rob him of his principal treaſure?

Murder is a diſturbance of the publick *peace*; and the greateſt invaſion of thoſe rights, which it is the very end of civil ſociety to protect.

As the baleful influence of this crime extends to the prince and the ſtate in general; ſo it's venom is felt by many *private* perſons at once, with peculiar anguiſh; the wrong being by no means confined to the unhappy perſon, who is the more immediate ſufferer. He at leaſt is out of the reach of further violence; and knows not the affliction of the widow, the orphan,

orphan, or the childleſs parent, who ſurvive to more laſting ſorrow.

A ſon, or huſband, a father, or friend, taken away by the courſe of nature, by the hand of Providence, in ſome diſtreſsful caſes, and to tender minds, has been found an affliction too heavy to be born; and a ſecond funeral has followed, through exceſſive ſorrow for the firſt. How greatly the anguiſh muſt be aggravated, and every ſting of grief ſharpened, when the ſtroke is unjuſt and bloody—may we never know!

To the *perſon himſelf* who ſuffers this extreme violence, the injury is the higheſt of all that can poſſibly be offered. The murderer takes away all the bleſſings of this world at once, and the time and means alſo which God had graciouſly granted of making preparation for another. He cuts me off perhaps while my repentance is yet imperfect, in my moſt unthinking hour; and with one blow conſigns, it may be, *two* immortal ſouls to perdition.

Oh! let us be always ready; for 'at an 'hour when we think not, our Lord com-'eth.'

Let us be always ready; and leave it in the power of no man ever to do us *ſuch* injury: that our greateſt enemies, when they have us moſt in their hands, may be able only *to kill the body*. We take away the ſting of death, and eſcape the cruelleſt part of their malice, if we die prepared for judgment.

Let

Let us be always ready; and reap this benefit even from the vices of men: let the wickedneſs of others induce us to be the more earneſt and early in every thing that is good; then will the fruit be ſweet, though the root is bitter.

Happy for us! if by any means, and urged by any arguments, we be but prevailed upon to live well: if we have ſuch a ſenſe, either of the dignity of man's nature, made in the image of God, or on the other hand of the frailty of our ſtate, and the dangers, that ſurround us on every ſide, as to be induced to make God our friend, and to take to ourſelves *the ſhield of* faith *and helmet of* ſalvation; armour, that will *quench the fiery darts* of our worſt adverſary.

He was a *murderer* from the beginning: his wiles brought death into the world: and he ſtill 'goeth about, ſeeking whom he may de-'vour.' If we ſuffer ourſelves to be overcome by this enemy, the miſchief is indeed irreparable.

The murderer, who takes my life, is utterly unable to make reſtitution: God however, I know, will raiſe me from the dead at the laſt day, and clothe me with a body no longer liable to diſſolution. But if I be then found to be dead 'in treſpaſſes and ſins;' there remains no future reſurrection from that death, but an endleſs ſtate of deſpair and torment.

Let us therefore be always prepared, 'and 'ſo that day *ſhall never* come upon us una-'wares.'

'wares.' Nevertheleſs, as death is naturally terrible, and this life is the time God hath granted us to prepare by his grace for a better; we may very rationally, and let us now devoutly, beſeech him to deliver us 'from lightening, and tempeſt; from plague, peſtilence, 'and famine; from battle, and murder; and 'from ſudden death.'

SERMON XV.

SIXTH COMMANDMENT. PART II.

MATTH. xv. 19, 20.

Out of the Heart proceed evil Thoughts, Murders.

'TAKE now thy ſon, thine only ſon, and 'offer him for a burnt offering.—And Abra-'ham ſtretched forth his hand, and took the 'knife to ſlay his ſon.'—He did no more; he was ſtopped by an angel. The *outward act* was not brought to the expected end: but in the *will* his obedience was complete and perfect; and accepted accordingly by the righteous judge, who knoweth the heart, and 'cal-

'leth thoſe things which be not, as though they 'were. By myſelf have I ſworn, ſaith the 'Lord, becauſe thou haſt done this thing, and 'haſt not withheld thy ſon, thine only ſon; 'that in bleſſing I will bleſs thee, and in mul-'tiplying I will multiply thy ſeed, as the ſtars 'of heaven, and as the ſand which is upon 'the ſea ſhore;—and in thy ſeed ſhall all the 'nations of the earth be bleſſed, becauſe thou 'haſt obeyed my voice.' If he had been ſuffered to proceed further, and finiſh the action he had undertaken, his ſervice had been but the ſame; and would have merited no greater recompence: His mind was wholly conſenting to the ſacrifice that was required of him. The will before God is the deed: and the queſtion is properly aſked by the Apoſtle, 'Was not Abraham our father juſtified by '*works*, when he had offered Iſaac his ſon up-'on the altar?'

But then, as it is an advantage to good men to be tried by a judge, 'who ſeeth not as man 'ſeeth, *but* is a diſcerner of the thoughts and 'intents of the heart:' ſo on the other hand, by parity of reaſon, we muſt acknowledge, that we ſhall be condemned juſtly before the ſame tribunal for the wickedneſs of our will; and that whenever we but attempt to do evil, with God it is executed.

When the three Jews were caſt by the king of Babylon into the fiery furnace; as they were martyrs, he was a 'murderer: *though* on their 'bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair

'of

'of their head ſinged, neither were their coats 'changed, nor the ſmell of fire had paſſed on 'them.'

If the wickedneſs be in the *intention* only, and have not broken out into an attempt; yet it is even then to be looked upon as accompliſhed: for the mind is the man; and his merit or guilt, whatever it be, is all there; it has no other habitation, nor exiſtence.

It is poſſible, you will ſay, he may be touched with remorſe, and repent of his wickedneſs before the commiſſion of it: but repentance implies guilt; and if it be ſincere, is, through God's goodneſs in Chriſt Jeſus, always entitled to mercy.

If you reply, that a greater obſtinacy in evil may be neceſſary to carry us through the execution of a wicked action, than what is implied in the mere intention; you ſay what may be true ſometimes; and when it is, God knows. And he alſo knows, when the ſame external act, in two criminals, is attended with different degrees of aggravation.

Not only the attempt, and intention; the very *wiſh* to do wickedneſs, is wicked. 'The 'thought of fooliſhneſs is ſin. Whoſoever 'looketh on a woman to luſt after her, hath 'committed adultery with her already, in his 'heart. Whoſoever hateth his brother, is a 'murderer: Whoſoever is angry without a 'cauſe, ſhall be in danger of the judgment.'

'*Ah!* who may ſtand in thy ſight, *O Lord*; '*thou, who* art of purer eyes than to behold

'iniquity? The heart is deceitful above all 'things, and desperately wicked:' Yet thou seest it's secret thoughts, and the inmost recesses of it's malignity. How shall we appear in thy presence, or lift up our eyes, and such hearts to thee? let us adopt the confession of thy holy prophet, 'O Lord the great and dread-'ful God, we have sinned and committed ini-'quity, and have done wickedly, and have 'rebelled, even by departing from thy pre-'cepts, and thy judgments: O Lord, righte-'ousness belongeth unto thee; but unto us con-'fusion of face.'

'*Thus* every mouth must be stopped, and all 'the world become guilty before God; *for* by 'the law is the knowledge of sin;' by that law especially, which makes the look only of lust to be adultery; and malice, murder.

But as guilt may be incurred, by evil thoughts and designs; so actions may be performed materially evil, without deserving censure.

It is not murder to kill a man in the just *defence* of yourself, or of another, from some great violence: the blood of him that is slain is upon his own head, if his hand was lifted up to shed blood.

The same may be said of that blood, which is spilt in the legal execution of 'justice. If 'any man hate his neighbour, and lie in wait 'for him, and rise up against him, and smite 'him mortally that he die; thine eye shall not 'pity him.—If a man come presumptuously

'upon

'upon his neighbour to ſlay him with guile, 'thou ſhalt take him from my altar that he 'may die.' The puniſhment of ſuch an offender is ſo far from bringing upon us, that it puts away the guilt of innocent blood. 'The elders 'of his city ſhall deliver him into the hand of 'the avenger; and thou ſhalt put away the 'guilt of innocent blood from Iſrael, that it 'may go well with thee.' The cruelty in this caſe were to ſpare; and mercy were a ſecond murder. Some other offences alſo, though they be leſs heinous than this, it may be neceſſary for the publick good, to puniſh in the ſame manner: and there are examples of the like ſalutary ſeverity, among the laws that came from God.

The blood that is ſhed in *war*, may alſo be unavoidable: when it is ſo, God knows, and will judge: it is out of our province. A common perſon, in moſt of theſe caſes, is able to frame but very imperfect notions. 'Put them 'in mind to be ſubject to principalities and 'powers.' We are not at liberty to cenſure, when we do not underſtand; nor always, when we do. We may lament however, if we do not condemn the ſlaughter, the butchery of the human race, created after the image of God: nay, we may condemn it. It can hardly be neceſſary and juſt on both ſides; perhaps it is on neither: and the authors, whoſoever they be, muſt have much to anſwer for. It is boaſted of one, that in the courſe of his wars he had ſlain three millions. You cannot compute

beforehand

beforehand how much miſchief you let looſe, when you open the doors of war. Happy are we, if we be but ſenſible of our happineſs, in our pacific employments, and inferiour ſtations. How dangerous a thing is power! Succeſs at laſt how fatal! It had been well for many a conqueror, if he had been cut off in his firſt battle, before he was intoxicated with his victories, or had acquired that habitual thirſt for the deſtruction of his fellow creatures, which is called glory, but will cover him with everlaſting confuſion. 'I beheld; and 'the heaven departed as a ſcroll, and every 'mountain and iſland were removed out of 'their places: and the kings of the earth, and 'the great men, and the rich men, and the 'chief captains, and the mighty men, hid 'themſelves in the dens, and in the rocks of 'the mountains; and ſaid to the mountains 'and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the 'face of him that ſitteth on the throne.'

But whatever may be alledged by either party, in excuſe of theſe diſputes between nations; *private war*, which is waged between two particulars members of the ſame civil community, who take the deciſion of their controverſies, each of them into his own hand, and commit the arbitration of their differences to their own ſword, muſt in all caſes be looked upon as indefenſible. If we have the benefit of living in ſociety, we muſt ſubmit to it's laws; and be content with the regular and ordinary execution of juſtice, however imperfect or difficult to

to be obtained. There will be danger of great iniquity, if we attempt to ſupply the defects of civil juſtice, and help ourſelves to a readier and ampler reparation. To ſay nothing of the breach of publick peace, and the tumults and diſorders thence naturally to be expected; it is not equitable, that a man ſhould be the judge of affronts and injuries done to himſelf: we may be ſure, they will be overvalued in ſuch eſtimation. In the eye of the ſufferer, and ſeen through the medium of prejudice and ſelf love, offences ſoon ſwell to a vaſt ſize; and any little neglect, or inconſiderate word, becomes a capital indignity.

But, beſides that *Chriſtianity* requires of us forgiveneſs to a great extent; *reaſon* will not authorize the gratification of reſentment for it's own ſake: the pleaſure of revenge, muſt not be allowed to be a juſt motive to any action.

The practice here cenſured is alſo *barbarous*, a cuſtom unheard of among the wiſeſt and politeſt nations. Ancient *Greece* and *Rome* were ſtrangers to it; and at this day, it is unknown to the moſt civilized empires in the eaſt. It is entirely a *Gothic* inſtitution; which there is not ſo much as a pretence for retaining now, when it is diveſted of all it's authority and form, and no longer imagined by any one to be a teſt of *right*, or *innocence*.

And even as to *courage* itſelf, it does not conſiſt all ſurely in quarrelling; but may be found in men of humane and gentle diſpoſitions. Many have faced an enemy without fear,

who

who never killed a friend: and ſome, who have acquired applauſe in theſe unlawful encounters, have nevertheleſs in the important hour of authorized battle, when magnanimity had been indeed a virtue, ſhrunk into the moſt abject and ſhameful timidity; ſeeking a temporary ſafety in eternal diſhonour, and betraying the name and glory, the poſſeſſions, power, and ſafety of their country.

There is ſtill remaining *one kind of murder* yet unmentioned; too ſhocking indeed to be mentioned, and contrary to the firſt and moſt univerſal principle in nature, which dictates to every creature the defence and preſervation of *itſelf*: a murder however, which has been but too often committed; and for which our own nation is eminently infamous. May God of his mercy keep us from the wretched end, and from the wicked life of the two traitors *Ahithophel* and *Judas*; from the miſery and madneſs, which lead the way to ſuch a deſperate act; and the unavailing remorſe, and everlaſting puniſhment, which, it is too probable, muſt follow! God keep us from all our enemies; and among that number, from *ourſelves*! Alas! we are the worſt; the only foes indeed, by whom we can be thus doubly injured, and plunged at once into the greateſt guilt and ſuffering. A ſpiteful tongue robs us of our reputation, the thief takes our ſubſtance, the aſſaſſin our life; theſe are not however the greateſt loſſes: our everlaſting welfare is put into our own hands, and can never be wreſted from

us

us without our consent. The worst injury a man can suffer, is always his own act. Vice is voluntary: and it is this only can deprive us of 'the light of that countenance, which is 'better than life;' and deliver us up to eternal death; 'to that outer darkness, where there is 'weeping, and gnashing of teeth; where their 'worm dieth not, and the fire is not quench-'ed.'

SERMON XVI.

Seventh Commandment. Part I.

EXOD. xx. 14.

Thou shalt not commit Adultery.

THE Christian law of marriage which forbids polygamy, and allows not divorce but in the case of adultery, may be found perhaps a more equitable, and even merciful law, than some men seem to think it; indeed the more merciful; for these very restraints which appear so strict and rigorous.

Some regulations, it may be presumed, every person would acknowledge to be necessary: hardly

hardly will it be maintained, that there is no other rule of chaſtity than inclination. And if we muſt be confined within ſome limits; the narroweſt, in this inſtance, may be the moſt juſt, and moſt commodious.

In the firſt place, we may venture to aſſert, that, though the Chriſtian precept ſhould not be deducible from the light of reaſon, it is at leaſt not contrary to it; if it be not enjoined by the dictates of nature, it is as conformable to them, as any other law would be.

Marry wives, ſays the law of Mahomet, *two*, *three*, or *four*. But why, we may aſk, ſo many? or why no more? What reaſon, when we have once begun to number, for ſtopping exactly in this place? Indeed this precept of the *Koran* has admitted of a latitude in the interpretation; and however preciſe the words of the command, the practice is by no means confined within the bounds preſcribed.

Secondly, the number of males and females brought into the world, according to the courſe of *nature* eſtabliſhed by Almighty God, is not greatly unequal: which is ſome intimation, that the allotment He intended, was that of one, to one. There ſeems to be no opportunity for polygamy, without danger of injuſtice.

Experience alſo ſtrengthens theſe apprehenſions. In thoſe countries, where the greateſt latitude is allowed in marriage, there is the greateſt oppreſſion in government: in order to maintain an indulgence, for which nature has not

not made proviſion, and to ſecure to a few perſons a licentious intercourſe with the other ſex; a great part of our own is enſlaved and mutilated.

Thirdly, ſuppoſe we knew no more, than that Almighty God, in the beginning, made a human pair, one man and one woman, to be the parents of the whole race: this ſingle fact, would it not be a kind of *precept?* an admonition to us, what is the moſt ſuitable to our nature, in the eſtimation of Him that made us?

But when we find it the *declared will* of our Creator, that 'a man ſhall leave his father and 'mother,' and ſhall cleave unto his wife, and 'they ſhall be one fleſh,' we muſt own it clearly taught, as our Lord himſelf indeed explains it, that this ſociety was originally meant to comprehend but two perſons, and be compleated between them; and that, at the very firſt marriage, *polygamy* was forbidden.

Divorce too, at leaſt for every little reaſon, for fancy, diſguſt, or a new affection, is comprehended under the ſame prohibition: nothing indeed leſs than unfaithfulneſs, a violation of what is moſt eſſential in this contract, it may fairly be inferred, will juſtify the diſſolution of ſo ſtrict an union, eſtabliſhed by ſuch authority.

Difficulties there will be always: many occaſions of ſelf-denial will meet us, whatever courſe we take; and they will meet us the oftener, the more anxiouſly we ſtrive to ſhun them.

them. There may alſo be caſes, where particular perſons are found to ſuffer by regulations, which yet are for the good of the whole: but the queſtion is, whether, as a general inſtitution, the perpetuity of the marriage-contract be not beneficial to mankind.

We have in our compoſition a principle, to which we are much indebted: uſe makes eaſy to us many things, which we fancy intolerable: we learn firſt to acquieſce in what we cannot alter, and then to like what we are accuſtomed to. The deſire of change requires ſome probability of ſucceſs, to keep it alive and active: our wiſhes muſt be fed with hopes, to become ſtrong enough to diſturb us; they decay naturally and are extinguiſhed, when we are once throughly perſuaded, that they cannot poſſibly be gratified.

How many deſires are thus checked, and ſtrangled in the birth; which might have grown up to an enormous ſtrength, and proved fatal to thoſe that conceived them! What conflagrations had ariſen from ſparks, which are thus happily extinguiſhed! It is a kindneſs, to keep us back from theſe great dangers; to ſhut us up in a ſecure and quiet haven; and not to ſuffer us to expoſe ourſelves to the perilous conflict with boiſterous paſſions, and a reſtleſs curioſity.

If we permit fancy to be our leader, there will be no end of it's rambling: licentiouſneſs knows no bounds. Were the laws altered, were Chriſtianity aboliſhed, and two, or three,

or

or a greater number of wives allowed; even this large liberty might prove unſatisfactory. Something forbidden will be ſtill left to create a new longing: a depraved appetite can find no ſweetneſs, but in that which is denied.

And this diſpoſition is ſeen in other paſſions. 'Haman went forth joyful, and with a glad 'heart. But when he ſaw Mordecai in the 'king's gate, that he ſtood not up, nor moved 'for him, he was full of indignation.—And 'Haman told of the glory of his riches, and 'the multitude of his children, and all the 'things, wherein the king had promoted him 'above the princes and ſervants of the king. '—Yet all this availeth me nothing, ſo long 'as I ſee Mordecai the Jew ſitting at the king's 'gate.'—One, little, inſignificant ſacrifice refuſed to his vanity, deſtroyed the reliſh of every other gratification. To perſons, whoſe minds are engroſſed by any exceſſive paſſion, the abundance they poſſeſs is nothing, the trifle wanted employs all their thoughts.

'Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, 'which was in Jezreel, hard by the palace of 'Ahab king of Samaria. And Ahab ſpake 'unto Naboth, ſaying, Give me thy vineyard, 'that I may have it for a garden of herbs, 'becauſe it is near unto my houſe; and I will 'give thee for it a better vineyard than it. 'And Naboth ſaid, the Lord forbid it me, 'that I ſhould give the inheritance of my 'fathers to thee. And Ahab came to his 'houſe heavy and diſpleaſed, becauſe of the 'word

'word which Naboth had ſpoken to him; and 'he laid him down upon his bed, and turned 'away his face, and would eat no bread.'— Shall we only ſay? men are found to want equally with a great deal, as with a little: Or may we not add? that this very abundance, is the real ſource of their neceſſities; or at leaſt of the exquiſite miſery, which they feel under them. To fall ſick for a *garden of herbs*, a man muſt be *King* over ten of the tribes of Iſrael.

But we need not go ſo far for arguments; or illuſtrate the inſatiable nature of one irregular deſire, by compariſons drawn from others: let us venture nearer to our ſubject; and take one example from Scripture, out of many, of the ſame perverſeneſs, in the very paſſion we are treating of.

'There were two men in one city; the one 'rich, and the other poor. The rich man had 'exceeding many flocks and herds; but the 'poor man had nothing, ſave one little ewe-'lamb, which he had bought and nouriſhed 'up; and it grew up together with him and 'with his children; it did eat of his own 'meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in 'his boſom, and was unto him as a daughter. 'And there came a traveller unto the rich man; 'and he ſpared to take of his own flock, and 'of his own herd, to dreſs for the way-faring 'man that came unto him; but took the poor 'man's lamb, and dreſſed it for the man that 'was come to him.'

The

The offender in this ſad, cruel inſtance, had already many, both wives and concubines. But all is too little. Nothing is acceptable, but the wife of another man, a faithful ſubject, a brave ſoldier, abſent from his own family, enduring hardſhips, and braving death in his ſervice.

The allowance of polygamy and concubinage, as we ſee by this example, is no ſecurity againſt the ſin of adultery; and perhaps might not ſo much as leſſen the temptation to it. For although it is very poſſible, that theſe liberties might prevent the tranſgreſſion, in ſome particular inſtances; yet they might alſo, on the other hand, create or inflame that vehemence of a pampered appetite, and rage of roving fancy, which is ſo unreaſonable and dangerous, and is never to be ſatisfied with indulgence. Did ever a miſer long leſs for gold, becauſe he had already too much? Did ever an ambitious man arrive at the extent of his wiſhes? He imagines perhaps, that he ſees ſome end of his deſires; and that the next acceſſion of power, which he has in view, ſhall be the utmoſt he will ever aim at: but he finds, that the horizon retires before him, and will ſtand ſtill only when he ceaſes to purſue it.

Nothing has been ſaid of that perpetual uncertainty and diſquiet, thoſe jealouſies and conteſts, thoſe innumerable and endleſs diſtractions, which will be found attendants on polygamy and divorce; except you imitate the example of thoſe nations, who ſeclude the whole

whole female ſex, in a manner, from all ſociety with the other; and keep them impriſoned, like ſlaves or criminals; adding thus cruelty to unkindneſs, and maintaining injuſtice by tyranny.

But, to conclude with what was obſerved before, irregularity has naturally no limits: one exceſs draws on another; indeed in all vices whatever, but in none more eminently than in that corrupt diſpoſition, which we are now conſidering. Obſerve how ſome of the faireſt fruits are eaſily preſerved in perfect ſoundneſs; but when once they are touched and tainted with the ſlighteſt beginnings of decay, how haſtily, in ſpite of all your efforts, they diſſolve into rottenneſs. The moſt eaſy therefore, as well as the moſt excellent way of being virtuous, is to be ſo entirely.

Impetuous appetite and blind fancy muſt be ſtopt in their career, or they will hurry us to deſtruction: it is our higheſt wiſdom to reſtrain them, before they have carried us to a ſingle ſtep beyond the line of innocence and ſafety.

SER-

SERMON XVII.

Seventh Commandment. Part II.

1 PETER ii. 11.

Dearly beloved, I beſeech you as Strangers and Pilgrims, abſtain from fleſhly luſts.

IT is very proper to examine into the reaſons, and ſee the utility of the precepts of Chriſtianity. Not that our compliance is always to depend upon the iſſue of ſuch inquiries. We are not in the place of lawgivers, but ſubjects; and may have a very ſufficient reaſon for our obedience, though we ſhould diſcern none for the commandment.

Moſt of the Chriſtian laws indeed are plainly the laws of reaſon and nature: the very ſame things preciſely are enjoined, which would have been our duty, had the Goſpel been ſilent. If there be any difference between them, there is no contradiction. Chriſtianity never requires any thing, which is forbidden by the voice of nature; never forbids, what that enjoins: yet it may command certain actions, concerning which the law of nature is ſilent; or it may prohibit, what that permits.

Nor let it appear ſtrange that there are duties, which, though conformable to our beſt reaſon, ſeem not rigorouſly preſcribed and commanded by it; virtues, which the law of nature would rather applaud, than require; and reſtraints, which, like a tender guardian, ſhe may not chuſe to impoſe, but would be well pleaſed to ſee us ſubmit to.

The *doctrines* of Chriſtianity, ſuch as the ſufferings and death of Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of God, and the clear proſpect of happineſs or miſery after death to all eternity, tend to turn away our thoughts and cares from this preſent world: and can it be any wonder, if ſome of it's *precepts* be found to exact a greater degree of diſregard for the things on earth, and of affection for thoſe above, than what was either likely to be found, or was generally called for under leſs enlightened diſpenſations? 'The 'times of *heathen* ignorance God winked at.' To the Jews he gave ſome precepts, becauſe they were not then able to bear better: 'but 'now he commandeth all men every where to 'repent; *and* to be perfect, even as their Fa-'ther in heaven is perfect.'

'Becauſe of the hardneſs of your hearts, 'Moſes ſuffered you to put away your wives: 'but from the beginning it was not ſo.' Before the *flood*, we read but of one perſon who had two wives: ſome of the *Patriarchs* took more. The *Jewiſh law* was very favourable to the men; if liberty in this caſe be a favour. Not that every liberty, ſeemingly allowed by it,

it, was therefore always innocent. There is room for great wrong within the letter of the law. And after all the conceſſions of Moſes in favour of divorce, we find one of the Prophets altogether condemning the whole practice; 'Take heed,—and let none deal treacherouſly againſt the wife of his youth; for the 'Lord the God of Iſrael ſaith, that he hateth 'putting away.'

Among the *Greeks* and *Romans*, though the laws, or at leaſt the practice might be different at different periods of time; yet in general, Polygamy was forbidden, Divorce allowed: and even the *women* were admitted to the participation of this liberty; as is indeed implied in that paſſage of St. Paul, where he diſſuades both parties from the uſe of it.

'If any brother hath a wife, that believeth 'not, and ſhe be pleaſed to dwell with him, 'let him not put her away. And the woman 'which hath an huſband that believeth not, 'and if he be pleaſed to dwell with her, let 'her not leave him.' Yet in the earlieſt and moſt virtuous times of the Romans*, to the credit of the republick, no man ever was known to put away his wife: no woman attempted to leave her huſband.

† The ſiſter of Herod the Great, is ſaid to have been the firſt woman among the Jews, that took upon her to divorce her huſband;

* Plutarch, in Theſeus and Romulus.

† Joſeph. Antiq. Jud. Lib. 15. c. 7.—πέμπει μὲν ἐυθὺς αὐτῷ γραμμάτιον, ἀπολυομένη τὸν γάμον, ὡς κατὰ τὰς Ἰουδαίας νόμους.

learning this leſſon from the Greeks and Romans.

But whatever liberty the laws of particular nations, or that of nature might allow, the Chriſtian rule is this, 'To avoid fornication let 'every man have his own wife, and every wo-'man have her own huſband:—let not the 'wife depart from her huſband, and let not 'the huſband put away his wife.'

The puniſhment of adultery, by the laws of many civilized nations, and even by the divine law given to the Jews, was *death*; and that to both the parties concerned in the offence. 'If a man be found lying with a woman, mar-'ried to a huſband, then they ſhall both of 'them die.' Let us not imagine the guilt to be no longer the ſame, becauſe the penalty is apparently leſſened: it is not leſſened; but only delayed, and reſerved to be inflicted with more certainty and ſeverity by other hands: 'whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.'

By the Chriſtian law, *fornication* is forbidden, as well as adultery. 'For this is the 'will of God, that ye ſhould abſtain from 'fornication.'

We need not proceed to enumerate *other* tranſgreſſions of Chriſtian chaſtity, leſs, or greater than theſe; or compute the degrees of aggravation, that may be in each of them. He is the *wiſeſt*, in this caſe, who is the moſt ignorant. It were ſome offence, to look narrowly into ſuch ſubjects: and of what uſe, alas! to adjuſt the difference of vices, which

are

are all inconſiſtent with a ſtate of ſalvation? For hear the ſentence of the great Apoſtle: 'Now the works of the fleſh are manifeſt, 'which are theſe; adultery, fornication, un-'cleanneſs, laſciviouſneſs,—and ſuch like: of 'the which I tell you before, as I have alſo 'told you in time paſt, that they which do 'ſuch things, ſhall not inherit the kingdom of 'God.—For this ye know, that no whore-'monger nor unclean perſon hath any inheri-'tance in the kingdom of Chriſt, and of God.' And then, to cut ſhort all diſputes on this ſubject, and ſtop at once the mouths of ſuch cavillers, who are furniſhed with objections by their luſts, and find it eaſier to argue than obey; he adds, 'Let no man deceive you 'with vain words, for becauſe of theſe things 'cometh the wrath of God upon the children 'of diſobedience.'

In the ſin of *adultery* indeed, there are many great aggravations of guilt. The wrong is not only grievous, but irreparable.

It is an *ungenerous* thing, and the ſign of a mercileſs, and therefore mean diſpoſition, for the gratification of a wanton appetite, to rob an innocent man, perhaps a neighbour, perhaps a friend, of the comfort and happineſs of all his life.

It is an *affront* and inſult; to be computed according to the eſtimation of the ſufferer. Such diſhonour is death to him: and may be ſo to *you*; at leaſt if the perſon, whom you thus injure, have no greater government of *his* paſſions,

ſions, than what he may learn from your example: 'For jealouſy is the rage of a man; 'therefore he will not ſpare in the day of ven-'geance.'

There is alſo *perjury* in adultery; it is the breach and violation both of a *contract*, and a *vow*: it is an offence directly againſt God, as well as man; and at the ſame time, and in a high degree, both immoral, and impious.

But the greatneſs of one vice is no vindication of another. The practice, and I had almoſt ſaid, *trade*, which is carried on by the diſſolute, of ſeducing, betraying, and conſigning to infamy and wretchedneſs, the young, the innocent, and unwary, has guilt enough of it's own, without entering into compariſons to render it truly diabolical.

Every *ſpecies* of impurity hath it's peculiar features of malignity; all ſufficiently odious, and deteſtable. Let them diſpute among themſelves the ſhameful preeminence: turn we our eyes away from all ſuch objects; and let us beſeech Almighty God, to pour into our hearts 'the wiſdom that is from above,' which 'is 'firſt pure, then peaceable:' that we may each of us 'know how to poſſeſs this veſſel' of the body 'in ſanctification and honour; not in the 'luſt of concupiſcence, as thoſe that know not 'God;' that we may be the temple of the Holy Ghoſt; that He may delight to dwell in us; and that we may never incur the puniſhment denounced in that awful threatening,

'If

'If any man defile the temple of God, him 'shall God deſtroy.'

SERMON XVIII.

Eighth Commandment. Part I.

EXOD. xx. 15.

Thou ſhalt not Steal.

'BUT, what! is thy ſervant a dog?' ſaid Hazael to the weeping Prophet, who was recounting to him the inſtances of his future cruelty: 'I know the evil that thou wilt do 'unto the children of Iſrael; their young men 'wilt thou ſlay with the ſword, and wilt daſh 'their children, and rip up their women with 'child: And he ſaid, But, what! is thy ſer-'vant a dog, that he ſhould do this?'

When we are to addreſs ourſelves to a congregation of Chriſtians, and eſpecially to perſons of ſome rank or character, of a birth or education above the level of the vulgar; and we produce with all ſolemnity for the ſubject of our counſels, ſuch a paſſage of Scripture as this,

this, 'Thou ſhalt not' ſteal; a ſpark of diſpleaſure may poſſibly be awakened in a perſon diſpoſed to take offence, 'Am I a dog, that I 'ſhould do this?' Are we fallen ſo very low in the eſtimation of the preacher? are we thought not only ſo depraved and wicked, but ſo mean and baſe, as to ſtand in need of exhortations to honeſty, and a diſcourſe againſt theft; Room there is enough for our amendment; but we are clear at leaſt of this contemptible ſin, and in no danger, we ſhould preſume, of offending againſt the *eighth* commandment.

The commandments are conceived moſtly in conciſe terms; but the meaning is extenſive. When we read, 'Thou ſhalt not ſteal,' all manner of injuſtice and wrong, every thing contrary to any law, divine or human, to reaſon, religion, or humanity, affecting the *property* of another, is to be underſtood as forbidden: and if we follow this idea but a little way, we ſhall find, that to ſteal is a thing more common in the world, than is ſuppoſed; and that thoſe perſons many times, who are ſhocked at the *word*, are yet intimate with the *offence*, and deeply guilty of the very crime, which they abhor.

To *rob*, you will acknowledge, is a vice, that ranks with great propriety under this claſs: the injury is not the leſs, becauſe it is attended with violence. There are ſome remains of ſhame, and fear, the two guardians of virtue, in thoſe who pilfer only in private; and are not yet hardened to ſuch a degree, as to offer open wrong, and avow their injuſtice.

But

But robbery alſo you deteſt, as much as theft; and find as little occaſion upon this head either for reproof, or counſel—It is true: in private perſons, and in little inſtances, this vice too is diſhonourable: but is it always ſo eſteemed in caſes of greater conſequence, and where it is worſe? The plundering of a province ſhall be a famous exploit, when that of a ſingle houſe is a capital crime: and the invaſion of a kingdom, though founded in wrong, and accompanied with terrible barbarities, yet takes it's name from the event, and if it be ſucceſsful, is always glorious.

But neither ſhall we need to dwell upon this particular. It is a tranſgreſſion of the law now before us; but, however truly to be lamented, and ſtrictly to be anſwered for, is not likely to come into *our* account. We cannot aſpire to the commiſſion of ſuch great crimes: it is a guilt above the reach of our ambition. And ſo far it is well: Happy were it for us, if either our ſituation or temper, if any principles, or motives, or means whatever would ſecure us with equal efficacy againſt other vices, or from all other tranſgreſſions even of this very commandment.

For, *thirdly*, as robbery, and that higheſt ſpecies of robbery, unjuſt war, are offences againſt this law; ſo alſo is *oppreſſion*, every encroachment of the rich and powerful upon the poſſeſſions or ſervices of their inferiors or dependants.

And

And this offence, it is to be feared, may be of a complexion more familiar to us. Alas! where almoſt, may we aſk, ſhall we find the perſon who will reſtrain himſelf, when he cannot be reſiſted? who will not lean a little, and be partial towards his own ſide, when there is nothing but *reaſon* to be urged againſt him? Here is the touchſtone of *ſincerity*, the trial of true virtue. Let me ſee the man, who can attend without a monitor to the whiſper of equity; who is an advocate with himſelf for every one, who has a claim upon him; who ſees his own cauſe with the ſame eye, with which he looks upon that of another; his own reaſons, not magnified by ſelf intereſt, another perſon's, not diminiſhed by inability to maintain them; who can be oppoſed by his inferiors, and feel no reſentment; ſpeak without harſhneſs, to ſuch as muſt not anſwer him; be gentle, where he might be inſolent with ſafety; civil, to thoſe he has obliged; pleaſed, with ſuch as have expectations from him; attending to conſiderations, of which he is not to be reminded; impoſing no hardſhips, where they muſt be born; and offering no inſults, when they cannot be returned; in a word, give me the man who finds no inducement to do wrong, in the *power* of doing it; and I will pronounce him a maſter in all the virtues and duties, which belong to the intercourſe of men with each other: reaſon requires nothing more of him; and he is perfect in that precept of the goſpel, which comprehends the law and the

the prophets, 'Whatſoever ye would that men 'ſhould do to you, do ye even ſo to them.'

But this character, as it is excellent, ſo is it proportionably rare. For as the Apoſtle aſks, 'Do not rich men oppreſs you, and draw you 'before the judgment ſeats?' Not indeed now, to moleſt you in the profeſſion of your *faith*; a point concerning which they are not apt to be anxious, either for you or themſelves; but in your *property* perhaps, which you are as loth to part with. The benefit of the *laws*, in many caſes, cannot be obtained eaſily: if you will have juſtice, you muſt pay for it. When rich men therefore taking advantage of this difficulty, withhold your right, under colour of referring it to the law, they rob; when under the protection of their own greatneſs, or of immunities meant for better purpoſes, they refuſe, or but delay to comply with the moſt equitable obligations, they ſteal:

If *magiſtrates* pervert, or refuſe, or delay juſtice: if they ſell it, or load it with unneceſſary expence or difficulties, when it is already ſo grievouſly overcharged with them; their injuſtice is worſe than that of others, in as much as it is aggravated by breach of truſt, and treachery; it is a robbery committed by a *guardian*.

But theſe acts of oppreſſion, I hope, are uncommon: there are other abuſes of power, of an inferior claſs indeed, and leſs importance, ſingly taken, but making up, it is to be feared, in number what they want in weight.

For

For the deſcent is gradual through the ſeveral ſtations of human life, there is a continued ſucceſſion and chain of preeminence and ſubjection down to the very loweſt: and when we abuſe our ſuperiority, of whatever ſpecies or degree, and have recourſe to our own little greatneſs to ſupport us in doing wrong; we commit the double offence of diſhoneſty and oppreſſion; and if we take advantage in any caſe of a perſon's diſtreſs and neceſſities, we ſwell the reckoning yet further, by adding cruelty to the number of our tranſgreſſions.

It is a further degree, or even a higher ſpecies of oppreſſion, of which, ſome are ſaid to be guilty; not indeed in this Iſland, but in countries ſubject to the government of Great Britain. They who are ſlaves there, if a late Author may be credited *, 'endure a ſlavery more 'compleat, and attended with far worſe cir-'cumſtances, than what any people in their 'condition ſuffer in any other part of the 'world, or have ſuffered in any other period of 'time.'--The moſt conſummate and perfect example of oppreſſion and inhumanity has been reſerved then, it ſeems, to be exhibited in theſe enlightened times, by the ſubjects of this *free* and *Chriſtian* nation! Let us turn our eyes for relief to ſome ordinary wickedneſs.

A man may be guilty of cruel injuſtice, in demanding no more than his own. If a creditor require only ſo much, as is really due to him;

* Account of the European ſettlements in America.

him; yet if he do it at a time, which, though legal, is not reaſonable, or in a grievous manner; and, ſtill worſe, if his deſign be not ſo much to ſecure his own right, as to ruin his adverſary, he is to be ranked with the moſt injurious oppreſſors; except we can think an injury is the leſs, becauſe it is owing to revenge, inſtead of avarice. To ſuch a perſon as this, in it's full ſtrength belongs the parable of our Lord, and the threatening that follows it. 'O thou wicked ſervant, I forgave thee all 'that debt, becauſe thou deſiredſt me: ſhould-'eſt not thou alſo have had compaſſion on thy 'fellow-ſervant, even as I had pity on thee? 'And his Lord was wroth, and delivered him 'to the tormentors, till he ſhould pay all that 'was due unto him. So likewiſe ſhall my 'heavenly Father do alſo unto you, if ye from 'your hearts forgive not every one his brother 'their treſpaſſes.'

Revenge indeed and malice fall properly under the *ſixth* commandment, according to the deciſion of our Lord, 'He that hateth his bro-'ther is a murderer.' There he is ſuppoſed to intend or wiſh evil to his brother's perſon; and here his deſigns are upon his property. The whole tribe of ſciences and of virtues, are ſo nearly related, that it has been held, no perſon can be poſſeſſed abſolutely of any one, without ſome acquaintance with every other: we cannot then be ſurpriſed to find the ſeveral vices alſo, to which the heart of man is ſubject, contiguous;

tiguous; and, like the colours in the rainbow, mingling imperceptibly with each other.

SERMON XIX.

Eighth Commandment. Part II.

LEVIT. xix. 11.

Neither deal falſly, neither lie one to another.

ACTS of injuſtice are moſt likely to be committed, and they are moſt to be dreaded, when ſupported by power, or borrowing ſtrength from ſome ſuperiority, whether of riches, credit, or ſtation.

But the commiſſion of injuſtice is not confined to the higher orders of men in the community, nor learned only from rank and dignity: wrongs can be done by the feebleſt hands, and are to be feared from the loweſt perſons by the moſt powerful.

And ſome who have travelled, and had an opportunity of comparing the manners of other countries with our own, have obſerved, that whereas people are in moſt places trampled on

on by their betters, and *return*, if we may ſo ſpeak, the ill treatment, on others ſtill below them; in *England*, on the contrary, the abuſe begins at the bottom, and is carried *upwards* through all orders, ſucceſſively to the very higheſt; there prevailing among us univerſally, ſuch an impatience of authority and reſtraint, ſuch a diſpoſition to moleſt and pull down thoſe above us, as is not to be found in any other nation.

No ſooner is any perſon, for his merit or abilities, or by his induſtry, or even by the general voice, and as it were at the command of the public, advanced to any eminent degree of authority and greatneſs; but inſtantly, every virtue diſappears: he is no longer thought deſerving of promotion, only becauſe he has obtained it; he is attacked with obloquy from every quarter; and that breath of popular favour, by which he was driven forwards, on a ſudden, is both turned againſt him, and ſwelled up into a ſtorm.

Nor does this extreme hardſhip and injuſtice attend only on the moſt eminent ſtations: the ſame principles work proportionably in lower inſtances; as a clod of earth falls to the ground, by the operation of the ſame cauſe, that keeps the planets in their orbits.

As the great ſometimes are tempted to oppreſſion, through a conſciouſneſs of their own power, and a contempt of the claims of mean perſons; ſo on the other hand, there are numbers of people of the lower claſs, who think it is but a little ſin to ſteal from thoſe who have

have abundance. 'Injuries are as they are 'felt; What is a rich Lord the worſe, for the 'want of ſuch a trifle as will maintain my 'poor family.'

Even the *Clergy* not unfrequently receive the ſame compliment; and ſometimes, when it is not due to them: they have the honour to be ranked among thoſe, who can bear to be pillaged, and may be injured without injuſtice.

This plea, or one very like it, is made ſtill more uſe of, and alledged with more confidence, when the thing unjuſtly retained or taken, is the property of a *ſociety*.

But the *public*, far beyond all private perſons, lies always open to theſe iniquitous depredations, and is attacked without mercy, from every quarter; as if it were of a conſtitution incapable of ſuffering, or there were nothing criminal, in doing injuries to a whole company.

But beſides the acts of injuſtice which we are guilty of, towards our ſuperiors, or thoſe, whom we are pleaſed to view in that light; there are others, which are done amongſt *equals*, or perſons conſidered as ſuch; where the inequality of the two parties, comes not in as a motive to the injury, being neither the encouragement on the one ſide to oppreſſion, nor the temptation to fraud on the other.

Theſe belong to ſuch branches of the intercourſe, which men have with each other, where the *traffick* is ſuppoſed to be on even terms, for the equal benefit of both parties. 'As 'a nail ſticketh faſt between the joinings of the 'ſtones

'ſtones, ſo doth ſin ſtick cloſe between buy-
'ing and ſelling.'

We need not deſcend to particulars: much penetration is not neceſſary to judge of theſe things, but a fair and equitable diſpoſition. Acuteneſs of underſtanding is ſeldom wanted, except to palliate what is wrong. Whatever is *underſtood* to be right by both parties, *is* ſo: and when they differ, it is moſtly concerning the *facts*, rarely about the *principles* they ought to act upon.

A great variety of caſes will occur; in which, as a fair and honeſt diſpoſition may give proof of it's integrity, ſo he who has a tendency to double dealing, will find opportunities in abundance to deceive himſelf, as well as thoſe that deal with him. He will have a thouſand apologies to allege, and be able to raiſe arguments in his own defence, which it may require ſome ſkill to anſwer, and yet but a little honeſty to deſpiſe. For certain truths are eaſier to underſtand, and feel, than to explain. And if you can once bear to deliberate, and begin to *reaſon* about a piece of profitable villainy, the odds are great that you *conclude* at laſt to commit it.

We need not add ſurely upon this ſubject that all *falſhood* is forbidden. It ſinks a tradeſman, or any man down to a low rank, when he ſubmits to this practice; and on any occaſion, or in any manner, tranſgreſſes the bounds of truth. We may ſafely pronounce all That to be ſtolen, which is gained by *lying*.

The like might be ſaid in the caſe of *contracts* of every ſort, when fraudulently made, or not performed faithfully; of 'breaches of 'truſt' repoſed in us, either by expreſs agreement, or tacit conſent; and in ſhort, of every *advantage* we take over another perſon, by which we deprive him of his ſubſtance, in violation of law, juſtice, equity, truth, or reaſon.

But there is no neceſſity to proſecute theſe things particularly: for it is not inſtruction or ſkill, that is requiſite; but rather, on the con-'trary, Simplicity and godly ſincerity,' the re-'verſe of fleſhly wiſdom.' An honeſt mind is the beſt inſtructor, and will teach us beyond a thouſand caſuiſts. 'It is joy to the juſt to do judg-'ment: he who truly loves that which is juſt and equal, and from his heart deſires another's welfare as his own, may be depended on: and he alone: he has a principle within him, a ſecret power, a *magnet* that will be an infallible director; and turn him true and ſure to the point of right, amidſt all the darkneſs of diſputation, and all the attractions of ſelf-intereſt.

Vice has often been compared to a noxious weed, of a quick, alas! and continual growth: and we are perpetually employed, we labourers in this *moral* field, to check it. We offer men reaſons to ſet againſt inclination, we oppoſe duty to intereſt; hoping to put ſome ſtop to the particular tranſgreſſions at leaſt that are moſt predominant: but they ſpring up again

in

in oppoſition to all our labours; and the rank harveſt grows under the hands of the reaper.

'Set your affections on things above, not 'on things on earth.' Could men be brought to alter the object of their deſires, the taſk of reformation would be all done at once; their conduct would follow of itſelf the change of their affections, and there would be little need for us to explain or inculcate the commandments. Let but this ſentiment, the deſire of heavenly things, enter into the heart, and poſſeſs the dominion there; and no vice can ſtand before it. Every irregular appetite and paſſion, ambition, envy, avarice, ſelfiſhneſs; all thoſe corrupt affections, by which we are led to be injurious to each other, are conſumed in a moment by this, 'fire from heaven.' The very root of injuſtice, the principle from which it ſprings, the means by which it grows, the whole matter by which it is ſupplied and nouriſhed, are burnt up and annihilated; and the heart impregnated with the ſeeds of grace, and virtue, becomes that 'Good ground, which 'bringeth forth fruit, ſome thirty fold, ſome 'ſixty, and ſome an hundred.'

SERMON XX.

NINTH COMMANDMENT. PART I.

EXOD. XX. 16.

Thou ſhalt not bear falſe witneſs againſt thy Neighbour.

IT doth not*, I think, appear, that the teſtimony of a witneſs, according to the law of Moſes, was to be delivered upon oath. His ſerious aſſeveration was however accompanied, according to the uſage of thoſe times, with the ſolemnity of ſome ſignificant action.

'At the mouth of two witneſſes, or three 'witneſſes, ſhall he that is worthy of death 'be put to death; but at the mouth of one 'witneſs he ſhall not be put to death. The 'hands of the witneſſes ſhall be firſt upon him 'to put him to death, and afterwards the hands 'of all the people.—If thy brother entice thee 'ſecretly, ſaying, let us go and ſerve other 'Gods—thou ſhalt ſurely kill him: thine hand 'ſhall be firſt upon him to put him to death, 'and afterwards the hand of all the people.' It ſeems, as if the witneſſes gave the firſt blow to the criminal; and that this was at the ſame time

* Levit. v. 1. may be underſtood of the *Criminal.*

time both the ſignal, and, as it were, the warrant for his execution. When St. Stephen was ſtoned, it was at St. Paul's feet that the witneſſes 'laid down their clothes;' which they put off, we may ſuppoſe, to make themſelves the readier to perform that office.

It is to this practice our Lord alludes, in his ſentence on the woman taken in adultery; and his deciſion, which is every way admirable, receives an additional propriety from this alluſion: 'He that is without ſin among you, 'let him firſt caſt the ſtone at her.'

With us indeed and other nations, falſe teſtimony hath, for many ages, been accompanied with *falſe ſwearing:* and this, no doubt, is an aggravation of the offence.

God hath ſaid, that he 'will not hold him 'guiltleſs, that taketh his name in vain;' intimating, perhaps, that he may delay the puniſhment; aſſerting ſtrongly, that he will inflict it. The offender may eſcape for a time, and ſeem to triumph in his impunity; but he is all the while under a curſe, by which he is faſter held, than by a thouſand bars. This ſentence of God, like a drawn ſword, hangs trembling over his head, and 'will cut him in ſunder in 'a day when he looketh not for it, at an hour 'when he is not ware.'

And as he, who taketh God's name in vain, 'ſhall not be held guiltleſs,' ſo we find a like threatening denounced againſt the other part of this complicated offence; 'a falſe witneſs 'ſhall not be unpuniſhed.' There is not only a force

a force and emphasis in this form of expression, but such a resemblance also to the other threatening, as is remarkable: 'The Lord will not 'hold him guiltless.——He shall not be un-'punished. Guiltless, and unpunished,' under God's just government agree, no doubt, in their *import*; at least they will be found to do so at the consummation of all things, when he shall 'render to every man according to his works.' But in this case, the very language is not different: it is the same word in both these places in the *original* לֹא יְנַקֶּה.

False testimony draws after it also by *human laws* a punishment considerable, and with us very ignominious: but yet not always, it must be acknowledged, proportionable to the malignity and mischief of the offence, or to the punishment which is inflicted for other crimes less atrocious in themselves, and less detrimental to the public. Of this the legislature are not ignorant: they have their reasons, we may be sure, for this lenity; and regard probably what is convenient and practicable, as well as what is just. The office of an *informer*, however sometimes necessary, is disagreeable and invidious; and should not, it is thought, be overcharged with difficulties and danger; innumerable crimes, even as the law now stands, escaping punishment, merely because no one is willing to be the witness *against* them, though *of* them, alas! we are all witnesses.

Those who make a trade of accusing, were always, and must be ever odious: but to prosecute

ſecute and bring to publick juſtice, ſome great and powerful offender, was eſteemed honourable in the common wealths of Greece and Rome, and was often the firſt ſtep to advancement.

The puniſhment appointed for falſe teſtimony has been * *death:* but the moſt natural and equitable puniſhment, (which alſo appears to have been inflicted in ſome † nations, and in the ‡ Roman government at a certain period) is that which the law of Moſes preſcribes. 'If 'a falſe witneſs riſe up againſt any man, to te- 'ſtify againſt him that which is wrong; then 'both the men, between whom the controver- 'ſy is, ſhall ſtand before the Lord, before the 'prieſts, and the judges which ſhall be in thoſe 'days; and the judges ſhall make diligent in- 'quiſition; and behold, if the witneſs be a falſe 'witneſs, and hath teſtified falſly againſt his 'brother; then ſhall ye do unto him as he had 'thought to have done unto his brother. So 'ſhalt thou put the evil away from among you. 'And thoſe which remain ſhall hear, and fear, 'and ſhall henceforth commit no more any 'ſuch evil among you. And thine eye ſhall 'not pity, but life ſhall go for life, eye for eye, 'tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.'

And

* Ut qui falſum teſtimonium dixiſſet, e ſaxo Tarpeio dejiceretur. XII. Tab.

In France, I ſuppoſe in ſome caſes only, this crime is ſaid to be now capital. Monteſ. Spir. of Laws. Book 29. Chap. 11.

† Diod. Sic. Lib. 1.—Οἱ δὲ ψευδῶς τινῶν καθηγορήσαντες ὠφειλον τοῦτο παθεῖν, ὃ τοῖς συκοφαντηθεῖσιν ἐτέτακτο.

‡ Cum calumniantes ad vindictam poſcat *ſimilitudo* ſupplicii. C. 9. 2. 17.

And were it not a matter of extreme difficulty to pronounce concerning the utility of laws, without the experience of them; one would think, that, as the ſevereſt puniſhment of wilful falſe teſtimony would be no more than juſt; ſo it would be the moſt likely to advance the cauſe of truth and juſtice, and the happineſs of every nation in the world.

For the crime ſurely is of the deepeſt dye; as wicked and as hurtful as can well be committed. Indeed it is not eaſy to imagine a greater degree of depravity, than goes to the commiſſion of this offence; or a complication of more grievous ſins, than are comprehended in it.

For, to paſs by the perjury, which belongs to this offence but by accident, and has been already mentioned; firſt, it is *murder*, or *robbery*, (as the caſe may happen to be;) and that more grievous, than if done by open violence, as loading the innocent with diſgrace and infamy.

Secondly, It is a violation of *truth*. And this ſurely is no ſmall part of every crime into which it enters. An act of injuſtice or cruelty, when it is joined with treachery, or brought about by falſehood and fraud, is doubly deteſtable, and raiſes our indignation to the higheſt pitch.

Thirdly, Falſe teſtimony is peculiarly injurious to *ſociety*. The immediate object of the crime, is far from being the only ſufferer: the ſtate itſelf is hurt; and that not merely by the loſs of a ſingle member, if that be the conſequence;

quence; but it receives, as it were, a wound in it's vital parts. For the adminiſtration of publick juſtice, is the very life of civil ſociety: it's Being depends upon it: if this be deſtroyed, we fall back that moment into a ſtate of nature. Now falſe teſtimony, in every inſtance, interrupts this adminiſtration of juſtice; and would ſtop it entirely, were it univerſally prevalent. A judge does not ſee every thing with his own eyes; he can only execute the laws, by giving credit to the witneſſes: truth, and civil ſociety muſt expire together.

Solemn falſe teſtimony is an offence, that muſt always be *deliberate* and premeditated. It is not the effect of any ſudden tranſport or guſt of paſſion, but ſhews a temper reſolutely corrupt, and hardened in wickedneſs.

Laſtly, for what need to purſue this hateful offence through all it's aggravations? it requires a degree of *impudence*, and meanneſs, a ſtrength of forehead, and baſeneſs of heart, that can only belong to the very worſt, the vileſt, and moſt abandoned character: ſo that if ſome other crimes were as pernicious as this, yet hardly could any be ſo odious. A bold uſurper, a bloody tyrant, is advanced, no doubt, to a high pitch of wickedneſs: yet even he is able to inſpire us with ſome degree of reverence for his authority or accompliſhments, and force us to mix reſpect with our abhorrence of him. But his ſpies and his ſycophants, the tools with which he does his work, and who are ſo ready ever to teſtify what it is convenient for him to have

have believed, (though it is not always believed,) theſe are yet more execrable: the two extremities of averſion are united in our ſentiments of them; and they are, at the ſame time, the moſt terrible, and moſt contemptible.

SERMON XXI.

Ninth Commandment. Part II.

PROV. x. 18.

He that uttereth a ſlander, is a Fool.

IN the large field of falſehood, there is room for a multitude of offences, not ſo terribly eminent as that lie, which we confirm by oath, and deliver ſolemnly in a court of juſtice.

The *firſt*, however, approaches towards it; the *calumny*, which is known to be falſe, and ſpoken with a deſign to do miſchief. The name of God, I grant, is not profaned; it is alſo ſomething, that the very place and forms of juſtice, are not defiled and proſtituted: in other reſpects, the injuſtice is much the ſame; and the ſtroke, ſometimes, as heavy as that which is given by the hand of the *executioner*.

Reputation,

Reputation, of all poſſeſſions, is the moſt valuable, next to a *good conſcience*; to which indeed it of right belongs, and from which it naturally ſprings. The *root* lies out of the reach of injury: Your innocence, by God's grace, no one can take from you, without your own conſent: but the fruit of *a fair reputation*, ſo beautiful, and fragrant, and in all reſpects ſo precious, this, alas! hangs expoſed to the aſſault of every paſſenger: the loweſt, as he goes along, can fling a ſtone upwards, and laugh to ſee the prize fall, though he cannot gather it.

It is an aggravation of the crime, or at leaſt of the folly of calumny, that commonly there is *nothing to be gained* by the commiſſion of it. 'Men do not deſpiſe a thief, if he ſteal to ſa-'tisfy his ſoul, when he is hungry; but, if he 'be found, he ſhall reſtore ſeven fold; he ſhall 'give all the ſubſtance of his houſe.' But he who ſteals away your reputation, has no pretence to the plea of neceſſity; ſince what he takes away from another, does not therefore fall into his own hands; and when he has ruined you by the robbery, he himſelf is no richer.

We have an account ſomewhere, of a certain tribe of *Savages*, who are poſſeſſed of a perſuaſion, that, whenever they have ſlain a man, they are immediately endowed with all his good qualities; which they think are transfuſed from the ſoul of the dead, into the perſon that has killed him. You will not wonder, that murders are frequent in that country; and that it is very dangerous for a man of merit, to be found

found unguarded among people of ſuch principles.

Having eſtabliſhed in our own thoughts a kind of competition with thoſe around us, and rivalſhip for reſpect and credit, we are apt to flatter ourſelves, that we are the better for their ſhame, and the more reſpected when they are ill thought of; we hope to appropriate to ourſelves, the honour which others loſe, and inherit the applauſes they poſſeſs no longer.

But we are much miſtaken in our concluſions. For, not to urge the danger of *repriſals*, which may be made upon us with equal ſucceſs, and perhaps more juſtice; this *very temper* and practice, if our enemies have nothing more to allege againſt us, is of itſelf one of the heavieſt imputations: and while we put it in their power to ſay ſo much ill of us truly, we purſue the very worſt meaſures in the world for a good character, whether to deſerve or gain it.

Nor is this only one great blemiſh in our reputation, and an inducement to our enemies to look out for more; but it is alſo a ſure ſymptom, that they will *find* them. A diſpoſition to calumny is too bad a thing, to be the only thing in us that is bad: a vice of that diſtinction, cannot be without a large retinue.

At leaſt, there will hardly be found in it's company, any quality highly good and excellent. Eminent merit can ſhine without a foil; it needs no ſuch helps, and condeſcends not to make uſe of them; but it is well pleaſed with whatever

whatever is well done, and ready and delighted to do juſtice to the excellencies of others.

A mind truly great, recommends and brings forward what is deſerving of encouragement; and being rich in praiſe, can beſtow it liberally, without any fear of impoveriſhment.

But, beſides the mere deſire of doing miſchief, which is *malice*; or the deſire of doing it to thoſe above us, which is *envy*; or to thoſe who have offended us, which is *revenge*; and beſides alſo the more general endeavour to depreſs others in order to raiſe ourſelves the higher, which is the miſtaken effort of a very mean *ambition*; there is yet another principle, which is apt to lead us into the ſame offence; and becomes one cauſe of that calumny, which ſprings from ſo many ſources.

We have all a deſire to be agreeable to our companions; and finding, that converſation is never ſo well reliſhed, as when ſeaſoned with ſlander; what can we do, but conform to the taſte of thoſe we live with, and be *cenſorious* out of *civility?*

But, perhaps the fault may not be wholly theirs, with whom we converſe. Our *talent*, it may be, lies the ſame way with their taſte: we have a genius, it is poſſible, turned for *ſatyr*, above any other ſpecies of compoſition. In that caſe, it will be no wonder, if we appear to leſs advantage upon a different topic; and that our *panegyricks*, growing in an *unkindly* ſoil, are found diſtaſteful, and unſavoury.

But,

But, be that as it may; we are ſtill by no means innocent. If the fault be in others, we ought not to partake in it; if in ourſelves, we may correct it. Should we think it reaſonable, were the caſe our own, to be abuſed merely for ſport, and belied only in order to be *laughed* at? The jeſt is loſt in the injuſtice and cruelty: it is a ſerious matter, at leaſt on the ſide of the ſufferer.

The hearers too are impoſed upon, and made the inſtruments of conveying a falſehood, and doing an injury. The evil ſpreads faſt and is multiplied, and probably increaſed and aggravated in it's courſe; and there is no end of the confuſion and miſchief. 'As a 'madman who caſteth firebrands, arrows and 'death: ſo is the man that deceiveth his 'neighbour, and ſaith, am not I in ſport?'

Praiſe, even when it is deſerved, may be conferred indiſcreetly; but *cenſure* is ſurrounded with peril on every ſide: the leaſt impropriety makes it unpardonable. You are not allowed to be miſtaken, when you take upon you to find fault. Time, place, perſon, occaſion, company, and ſo many circumſtances muſt meet together, that the proper opportunity to diſcommend, if we will but wait for it, cannot occur often. Cenſure is in ſeaſon ſo very ſeldom, that it may be compared to that bitter plant, which hardly comes to it's maturity in the life of a man, and is ſaid to flower but once in a hundred years.

The

The ſpirit of *Party* is another principal, and almoſt univerſal cauſe, of theſe offences of the tongue.

Beſides the greater conteſts in Church and State; there are perpetually ſpringing up petty competitions, from intereſt commonly, ſometimes by accident, or almoſt without occaſion, which divide people into little armies; in one or other of which, we are moſt of us too forward to engage: we are eaſily involved in the prejudices of thoſe around us; and being ſwept away by the torrent of diſſenſion, we increaſe it.

Hence it is, that moſt men, and eſpecially the moſt active and buſy, have two characters given them, widely different from each other. The wiſe and wary give none haſtily, and credit neither without abatements. The worth, and the demerit of the greateſt number is always moderate: whatever is repreſented as extraordinary, is probably exaggerated.

Nor are the profligate and the weak alone, drawn aſide by theſe prejudices; diſcreet and worthy perſons, find it difficult to reſiſt them. The appearance of friendſhip, gratitude, honour, and other good qualities inſenſibly miſlead us: and in purſuit of the image of theſe glittering virtues, we loſe the ſubſtance of Truth and Charity.

Laſtly, we are but too apt, all of us, to be influenced in what we ſpeak, by a latent partiality for *ourſelves*. How often are we found to fail in repreſenting the cleareſt tranſaction?

not

not from any formed deſign of doing wrong, or ſpeaking falſly; but through that miſt and darkneſs, which ſelf-intereſt raiſes, and the paſſions ſpread before the underſtanding: Imperceptibly almoſt to ourſelves, the biaſs of partiality, as we paſs along in our narration, is working upon every point and circumſtance a little; till in the end, we have wandered widely from the line of Truth, or even move in oppoſition to it.

To relate the fact, to repreſent our own words and actions, and thoſe of others in which we are intereſted, *as they are*, is no ſlight attainment; but demonſtrates a ſuperiority of mind, which is the peculiar quality of the higheſt characters.

How great, how truly noble, in whatever ſtation, were that perſon, whoſe veracity ſhould be found untainted by ſelfiſh conſiderations! who might be left to ſtate the cauſe of his adverſary, and truſted with the rights of every party!

'Lord, who ſhall dwell in thy tabernacle,
'or who ſhall reſt upon thy holy hill? Even he
'that leadeth an uncorrupt life, and doth the
'thing which is right, and ſpeaketh the truth
'from his heart; He that hath uſed no deceit
'in his tongue, nor done evil to his neighbour;
'and hath not ſlandered his neighbour.'

SER-

SERMON XXII.

TENTH COMMANDMENT. PART I.

EXOD. XX. 17.

Thou ſhalt not covet.

HAVING before forbidden all actual encroachments upon the property of another, the divine Lawgiver proceeds to impoſe his reſtraints upon the mind: and prohibits in the ſame tone of authority, not only the violent invaſion, but the very inward *deſire* of that which cannot juſtly become our own.

He had need be a *Divine* Lawgiver, who takes upon him to impoſe ſuch precepts; and control thoſe workings of the ſoul, which are inviſible to mortal eye, and can be tried before no human tribunal.

We find no ſuch injunction as this, I conceive, in the appointments of *Lycurgus* or *Solon*, in the Laws of the *twelve tables*, or the *Inſtitutes* of the *Roman emperor*. Content with the regulation of the external act, and the impoſition of ſome reſtraint on the tongue, they preſume not to proceed further; but de-

cently and prudently ſtop, being arrived at the limits of their authority.

But the *Supreme Lord* has no bounds ſet to his Empire; which both reaches throughout infinity, and penetrates to the inmoſt receſſes: his dominion is *univerſal*, and *complete*. 'He 'is above all, and through all, and in you all.' The thoughts and intents of the heart, make indeed the principal ſubjects of his inſpection and government: to deſire, and wiſh only to be exempt from his authority, is already to have rebelled againſt Him.

Exhortations others may have uſed, or given their *counſel*, in the capacity of *wiſe men* or *Philoſophers*, for the benefit of ſuch citizens as would aſpire to perfection: but here is a *Law* in all it's forms, ſet forth with the moſt ſolemn, nay, even with a miraculous pomp, in terms the moſt preciſe and peremptory, and in company with the other fundamental inſtitutions of the common wealth.

Thou ſhalt do no murder.
Thou ſhalt not commit adultery.
Thou ſhalt not ſteal.
Thou ſhalt not bear falſe witneſs.
Thou ſhalt not *covet*.

To what purpoſe this laſt prohibition? If I ſteal, or bear falſe witneſs, I know the penalty: 'of the beſt of his own field or vineyard, ſhall 'he make reſtitution;—Ye ſhall do unto him, 'as he thought to have done unto his brother.' If I commit murder, my life is anſwerable for the tranſgreſſion: the puniſhment is fixed, and the

the witneſſes ready to 'lay their hand upon 'my head.'

But what if I commit no murder, but only deſire and wiſh to do it? Suppoſe I do not ſteal with my hands, but covet only in my heart, the poſſeſſions of my neighbour: what is the penalty of this tranſgreſſion? or who ſhall undertake to be the witneſs? Is it not ſuperfluous and trifling, to iſſue out proclamations that muſt be of no force, and edicts that can never be executed? What is a Law, without a ſanction? or what are both theſe, where there can be no proof of the offence? Is not this rather to ſport with the majeſty of laws; and to debaſe and expoſe to ridicule, what is moſt important and ſacred? The dignity and wiſdom of the great Lawgiver of the Jews, forbid us to aſcribe to him a conduct ſo plainly inconſiſtent and unmeaning.

What then can we infer, but that he knew, *his* laws had an authority 'more than human;' that they only paſſed through his hands; but were indeed enacted by one, who was alſo able to ſee them executed? Him, 'who is a diſ-'cerner of the thoughts and intents of the 'heart;' and can 'bring every work into judg-'ment, with every ſecret thing, whether it 'be good or evil:' and who, he knew, would do it; would interpoſe even in this preſent world, ſo far as ſhould be neceſſary for the honour of his government, and the completion of his promiſes; leaving however, we may well allow, a more full and perfect, a more

distinguished and universal display of his attributes, and vindication of his providence, for the final revelation by his Son, and the judgment of the world to come.

It is written—'The law was our Schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ. In this commandment especially, 'Thou shalt not covet,' it breathes the spirit of the Christian dispensation; teaching men to practice it's precepts from an inward principle, and to 'shew the 'work of the Law, written in their hearts.'

There is somewhere an account, fabulous I allow, but yet instructive, of an Almond Tree, of a particular species, endowed, it seems, with this singular property; whatever mark you shall inscribe upon the kernel of the nut, when it is planted, the same will be found visibly delineated on all the leaves and fruit of the tree that springs from it. The stone being opened at first, and the intended character once carefully drawn, the rest follows of course, without further application. As the tree shoots up and spreads, that original impression is displayed on every side, and multiplied in a thousand branches.

How many rules and maxims of life might be spared, could we fix a principle of virtue within; break the *stony heart*, as the Scripture calls it, and inscribe this living sentiment of the love of God in the affection; that tender but powerful part of our frame, from which our whole life, and all our actions are derived,

as

as the tree, branches, leaves, and fruit, ſpring out of the kernel of the almond?

Were the Spirit of Piety within, and God's name written in our breaſt, how little teaching would then ſuffice, to ſhew us what is pleaſing to him? His love, once in the heart, would paſs with eaſe into our whole behaviour; and leave upon all our words and actions, engraved, and ſhining, as on the Mitre of Aaron, 'Holineſs unto the Lord.'

If Honeſty and Juſtice be once ſeated in the affection, the deciſions of Caſuiſts will be no longer wanted: he who loves righteouſneſs, is maſter of all the diſtinctions in morality.

'The law is for the ungodly.' The other commandments, with the train of penalties annexed to them, are made only for thoſe perſons, who are not good enough to be governed by this precept.

'He that curſeth his Father or his Mother, 'ſhall ſurely be put to death.'

'Whoſo ſheddeth man's blood, by man ſhall 'his blood be ſhed.'

'The adulterer and the adultereſs ſhall 'ſurely be put to death.'

'He that ſtealeth a man ſhall ſurely be put 'to death.'

'If a man ſhall ſteal an ox, or a ſheep, he 'ſhall reſtore five oxen for an ox, and four 'ſheep for a ſheep. If he have nothing, then 'he ſhall be ſold for his theft.'

'If a falſe witneſs riſe up againſt any man, 'to teſtify againſt him that which is wrong;

'—then

'—then ſhall ye do unto him, as he had 'thought to have done unto his brother.—And 'thine eye ſhall not pity, but life ſhall go for 'life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for 'hand, foot for foot.'

The Law, you ſee, is encompaſſed with terrour; like that mountain, from which it was delivered. 'Take heed to yourſelves, that ye 'go not up, or touch the border of it. There 'ſhall not a hand touch it, but he ſhall ſurely 'be ſtoned, or ſhot through. And there were 'thunders, and lightnings, and a thick cloud 'upon the mount, and the voice of the trum-'pet exceeding loud, ſo that all the people that 'was in the camp, trembled.'

But what is all this terrour, and theſe dangers to that man, who is not prompted to tranſgreſs? To him, who has brought his heart into ſubjection to this ſublime precept, *Thou ſhalt not covet*, the threatenings annexed to the commandment are a *dead-letter*; the yoke of bondage is broken. Duty and deſire concurring, he has the pleaſing taſk of fulfilling his Maker's will, by all thoſe offices which are the moſt agreeable to himſelf. Such labour is delight; ſuch ſervice perfect freedom. He is paſſed from under the law, into an *evangelical*, or rather indeed a *heavenly* ſtate; reſembling 'the 'ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, *and the* an-'gels which do always behold the face of the 'Father which is in heaven,' and receiving ſome foretaſte even now, of the 'fulneſs of joy 'that

'that is in God's preſence, the pleaſure which 'is at his right hand for evermore.'

O happy, envied ſtate of thoſe good men, who are 'delivered from the bondage of cor-'ruption into *this* glorious liberty of the chil-'dren of God!' Slaves no longer to the tyranny of ſin; nor condemned to wage an everlaſting war, with turbulent paſſions, depraved appetites, and inveterate habits of vice; Avarice, mean and miſerable; Ambition, never to be ſatisfied; Pride, puffed up with wind; Vanity, decked with feathers; Envy, Wrath, Intemperance, and every inordinate affection, the offspring of Selfiſhneſs and Folly, the parents of Shame and Torment. No diſpute, delay, or murmur, againſt the voice of Wiſdom and Piety. Peace all, and harmony within the good man's breaſt; and his hopes full of immortality. Men he regards, all, with the eye of Charity; and looks up to God with the ſentiments of a Son, reverence ſoftened by affection, and that 'perfect Love which caſ-'teth out Fear.'

How *near* to this perfect ſtate, it is poſſible for us to arrive on this ſide the grave, inſtead of diſputing, let us, each of us, learn by experience: aſſured in the mean time, that every ſtep we take towards it, is both an advancement of our *preſent* felicity, and a confirmation of our title to the bliſs which is *everlaſting*.

SER-

SERMON XXIII.

TENTH COMMANDMENT. PART II.

COLOS. iii. 2.

Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

HE who would raiſe a lofty fabrick, muſt dig low for the ſureſt ground to place it on: and whoever aſpires after the greateſt heights of true glory and happineſs, muſt lay the foundation in *humility*.

We recommend to you only that contentment, which is indeed the nobleſt ambition; no other diſintereſtedneſs, than what is moſt for your advantage.

A greedy and reſtleſs temper of mind, diſcontented with it's preſent lot, and eagerly aſpiring after a higher ſtation; in the *firſt* place, is *miſerable*, inconſiſtent with all comfort and happineſs. It is in itſelf, let your external advantages be what they will, a perpetual cauſe of diſquietude and torment: it is a longing, that can never be ſatisfied. Succeſs only adds fuel to the flame, and gives it ſtrength to ſtretch out to a wider compaſs.

Secondly, it is an *irreligious* temper of mind: and this *two* ways; both as it takes too much poſſeſſion of the heart, to leave room for ſenti-

ments

ments of piety, engroſſing our whole concern, and employing all our endeavours; and alſo more directly, as it implies a diſſatisfaction with the appointments of God, and a murmuring at his providence; as if he had been leſs kind to us than he ought to have been, and partial in favour of others. It is mutiny againſt our heavenly commander: we refuſe the ſtation he aſſigns, and diſdain the ſervice on which he orders us.

And *thirdly*, it is a temper very contrary to *juſtice* and fidelity towards men. *He* will not always withhold his *hands*, whoſe *heart* is continually ſet upon another's property. There will be ſome unhappily favourable moment, when, opportunity conſpiring with inclination, the injuſtice long premeditated, will be at length accompliſhed; and then, as the prophet ſpeaketh, 'they who conceive miſchief, 'bring forth iniquity.'

This is to be underſtood of the greater violations of juſtice, attended with danger; for in leſs inſtances, and thoſe that are ſafe, there will be no ſuch circumſpection and delay. The unfairneſs of the heart within, will be ſhewing itſelf inceſſantly; and, like the ſtain of glaſs, through which a ray of the ſun paſſes, will infect all objects, and give it's colour to every tranſaction of life.

Or even if it ſhould be hindered, by means of ſome external impediment, from appearing; the very inward *diſpoſition*, the deſire and deſign of doing wrong, is juſtly to be puniſhed by

by that judge, 'who will bring to light the 'hidden things of darkneſs, and make mani-'feſt the counſels of the heart.'

It is the conſideration of this future judgment, and the eternal, unchangeable ſtate of happineſs or miſery conſequent to it, which is the ſovereign antidote for the malady of diſcontent. Let but your hopes be full of immortality, your thoughts and hearts inflamed with the joys of heaven; and the poſſeſſions and pleaſures of this world, will be ſeen to be little worth the conteſt: their luſtre will die away, like the glimmering of the ſtars when the ſun ariſeth.

Days and years, poverty and riches, when ſet againſt eternity, and compared with heavenly bliſs, loſe, in the infinite diſproportion, all their own petty inequalities, and are equally nothing; no objects to excite animoſities among immortal ſpirits, redeemed from eternal miſery, and heirs of everlaſting glory.

Envy and inſolence, diſcontent and pride, avarice and ambition ceaſe with the intereſts of this earth; by which they are ſuſtained and nouriſhed, as the lamp is fed with oil: When the ſoul is touched from above, every thing of terreſtrial materials is deſtroyed.

The great doctrines, the awful truths, the glorious promiſes, the tremendous threatenings of our holy religion, catch the heart, and carry it as a ſacrifice to heaven; but, like the fire of the Lord that fell on the altar of Elijah, *conſume the* wood, *and the* ſtones, *and the* duſt.

The

The *example* and *death* of our Lord Jesus Christ, is to Christians an argument above all others, enforcing indeed every virtue; but with peculiar advantage, this contempt of earthly greatness, and the love of God and man.

It is the thing least observable in his example, that he prayed for his murderers: 'Father, 'forgive them, for they know not what they 'do:' he left the bosom and bliss of his Father, and the glory which he had with him before the world was, *on purpose* to suffer thus; for this very end, that he might endure abuse, and insults, stripes, and death; a death ignominious, exquisitely painful, and lingering.

He suffered this from the hands of *men*; for whose whole race it was, that he had abased himself so low, and endured so much. He came down from heaven, and would be made man, for the sake of men, who already owed their Being to him; yet had broken his laws, were regardless of his authority, insensible of his affection, and prepared to crucify him.

They indeed were enemies; but his love continued. 'Whom he once loved, he loved to 'the end.' He created them to be good and happy; and died for them, when they were become wretched sinners.

'The riches of his goodness, and forbear-'ance, and long suffering! Who is able to 'comprehend this breadth, and length, and 'depth, and height!'

Words

Words cannot repreſent, no tongue of Men or Angels is able to expreſs it: Let this 'love 'be ſhed abroad in your hearts;' then ſhall you underſtand, what we cannot utter; and 'know the love of Chriſt, which paſſeth know-'ledge.'

Then will the commandments of God be no longer grievous to us: the hardeſt duties will become eaſy; and the forgiveneſs of injuries, be like the plaineſt parts of juſtice.

All mankind will then be dear to us, for his ſake who made, and who redeemed them. How ſhall we be able to hate any one, thus favoured by him who loved us, and died for us?

All our litle animoſities will be burnt up in that holy flame of Divine Love: and we ſhall be as incapable of conceiving hatred, as of committing murder.

This is the great ſecret, to remove all difficulties out of the road of duty; and make the ſervice of God, perfect freedom. 'Thy teſti-'monies are my delight, *ſays the Pſalmiſt*; The 'law of thy mouth is dearer unto me, than 'thouſands of gold and ſilver: *And our Lord*, 'my meat is to do the will of him that ſent me.' When the Apoſtles had been impriſoned, and beaten 'they departed from the preſence of the 'council, rejoicing that they were counted 'worthy to ſuffer ſhame for the name of 'Chriſt.'

This is the nature of Love; The greater the ſacrifice that it makes, the higher the ſatisfaction

faction it enjoys. It is even uneasy, and discontented, as it were, if it's assistance be not wanted; if no occasion can be found, by which it may give full proof of it's activity and ardour.

When we are touched with this sentiment, we shall no longer complain of hardships in religion; nor want to know, how near we may approach with safety toward the violation of a commandment. But how much soever we do, we shall never think we have done, or can do enough; but shall be always pressing forward, and aspiring to more, and still higher expressions of affection and gratitude.

Obstructions will but increase our ardour: as a strong flame is made more fierce, by the same wind which extinguisheth a small one.

'Love is strong as death. Many waters 'cannot quench love; neither can the floods 'drown it. If a man would give all the 'substance of his house for love, it would ut-'terly be contemned.'

Riches cannot purchase love; but love inspires it. The highest instance of affection is the love of enemies, That of Jesus Christ to men. Reflect upon this love; set it before your eyes; desire at least to be sensible of it, and to feel kindling in your own heart, a return for that infinite affection; 'We love him, be-'cause he first loved us.'

Cherish this spark, by sobriety and virtue, by meditation and prayer, and self denial; and especially by acts of charity, and compassion, and

and forgiveneſs to mankind, to the leaſt, and loweſt, and worſt: till 'the love of God be 'perfected' in you, and that *birth* finiſhed, by which you will become a *new creature*; as the Scripture ſaith, 'Every one that loveth is born 'of God.'

Then will you rely on your Father's care, and exult in his affection. 'If God be for us, 'who can be againſt us? He that ſpared not 'his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; 'how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us 'all things?'

SERMONS

ON THE

LORD's SUPPER.

SERMON I.

MATTH. xxvi. 26, 27, 28.

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it; and gave it to the disciples, and said, take, eat, this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, drink ye all of it. For this is my blood of the new Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

THE foundation of the holy Rite here instituted is this, which is indeed the great doctrine of the Christian religion, 'That our Saviour Christ, both God and Man, did humble himself even to the death upon the cross for us miserable sinners.'

He was 'in glory with the Father before the world was. He was in the beginning with God, and was God. All things were made by him: and without him was not any thing made that was made.' Such was his state of divine happiness and glory.

On the other hand, man was fallen from that degree of earthly comforts and enjoyments, in which this Divine Word had placed him, into a state of labour, sorrow, diseases, and death, by the sin of our first parents; and

was alſo liable to the ſentence of eternal condemnation, to be pronounced by the juſt judgment of Amighty God upon every wilful tranſgreſſor. *He* was in the poſſeſſion of unutterable glory and felicity; we were overwhelmed in miſery, and devoted to deſtruction.

But behold the love of God! He lays aſide his divine perfections, and clothes himſelf with our infirmities. He haſtens to our deliverance; takes upon him our fleſh; he lives in the form and faſhion of a man amongſt us; in a ſtation of labour and indigence; doing good continually, ſuffering reproach and wrong; and at laſt is put to death unjuſtly, ſcornfully, and cruelly; by his own creatures, for whoſe ſake alſo he had thus abaſed himſelf. All this he willingly undergoes, to do the will of his Father; to fulfil the Scriptures that thus it muſt be; to teach us the way that leadeth to eternal bliſs; to give us an example of goodneſs and patience; and to make atonement by his ſufferings for our ſins.

'In the ſame night in which he was betray-
'ed, he took bread, and when he had given
'thanks, he brake it and gave it to his diſci-
'ples, ſaying, Take, eat, this is my body,
'which is given for you; do this in remem-
'brance of me.'

Imagine you ſee our Divine Redeemer ſitting with his diſciples at his laſt ſupper, and hear him addreſſing himſelf to them in the following manner.

The

The ſolemn ceremonies which I and you are now obſerving, are memorials, you know, of a great event which happened many ages ago to your forefathers: this lamb before us is the repreſentation of that which was ſlain and eaten by them in Egypt. Come, I will inſtitute a new rite, to be kept in remembrance of what ſhall immediately befal myſelf, on your account. Before the evening and the morning ſhall conclude the preſent day, this body of mine ſhall be delivered into the hands of men; and they ſhall wound, and pierce, and kill it. I take this bread into my hands, and break it to pieces: take, eat; it is my body which is given for you. By this token you ſhall keep in memory and repreſent to all ages unto the end of the world, this 'precious ſacrifice, fore-'ordained before the foundation' of it, and now going to be offered for your ſake.

My Father, who is in heaven, loves me, his own, and only begotten Son, with a tender and unparalleled affection. He 'loved me 'before the foundation of the world.' And though I indeed was, and am willing to ſuffer, yet would he not have ſent me down into this ſtate of humiliation, to undergo the ſufferings and death which are even now preparing for me, if he had not alſo loved you, and had compaſſion on you, though enemies to him by evil works, and dead in treſpaſſes and ſins. For God indeed is Love. It is the chief part of his very nature, which it is poſſible for you to comprehend, and to imitate. Love him

therefore, who is Love, with all your heart and mind and ſtrength. This is the firſt and great commandment. Of his own tender pity towards a loſt world, he ſent me to do, and ſuffer all that you have ſeen, and ſhall ſoon ſee, for the benefit of men. And when I am removed from you, and you ſee me no more, he ſhall give you another comforter, even the Spirit of Truth, to ſupply the want of my preſence, and conduct that work of the ſalvation of mankind, for which the Father ſent me, and for which I am come willingly into the world.

And as the bread which I broke repreſented my crucified body; ſo this cup which I command you all to drink of, let it ſignify my blood, which is now going to be poured out for all men.

It is written that 'it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the ſoul: by the law almoſt all things are purged with blood: and without the ſhedding of blood is no remiſſion.' But it is not poſſible that the blood of bulls and of goats ſhould take away the ſins of men. That was required, and was available only, as a type of my blood, now to be ſhed, once for all. Take this cup, to be partakers of this atonement.

You remember alſo, when Moſes had read to the people the book of the covenant between God and them, and the people conſented to the covenant, and ſaid, 'All that the Lord hath ſaid will we do, and be obedient;' Moſes

Moſes took half of the blood of the ſacrifices, and ſprinkled it on the altar, and the other half he ſprinkled on the people, and ſaid, 'Behold the blood of the covenant which the 'Lord hath made with you.' The blood was ſprinkled on both the contracting parties; the one half on the altar, repreſenting him who was there worſhipped, and the other half on the people of the Jews.

That covenant is now expiring in my death, and a new one is to be made with all the nations of the earth. I am the victim offered at this great ſolemnity, on the altar of the croſs. When you take this cup, you ratify this new covenant on your part, and give your conſent to the conditions of it.

You will be no longer bound by the ceremonial law. It expires of courſe with me, who am it's end and conſummation.

But my own power and providence ſhall aboliſh it more effectually, and execute what I now predict. Some even of yourſelves, to whom I am ſpeaking, ſhall live to ſee the time, when of this noble Temple, the work of ſo many years, the wonder of ſo many ages, 'there ſhall not be left one ſtone upon another 'that ſhall not be thrown down.'

As you are to be thankful for this deliverance from 'a yoke which neither your Fathers 'nor you were able to bear;' ſo take care not to turn your liberty into licentiouſneſs. The ſenſe of your freedom from this bondage ſhould reſtrain you from violating thoſe laws which

are

are of everlasting obligation. As you will not henceforth be occupied in sacrifices, and other burdensome ceremonies; apply yourselves so much the more to what is better.

Look upon the whole race of mankind, as your neighbours and brethren. Embrace them with a cordial, and unrestrained affection. They were always the workmanship of the same creator, and bore his divine image; they are now to be redeemed by the same blood.

Do good to as many as possible. Imitate in this your Father which is in heaven. But as you can follow him in doing good but a little way; come nearer to his example in good wishes and kind intentions. Let there be no limits to the exercise of this part of your charity. Since you can never repay him any thing for his infinite patience, and mercy, and love to you: love men for his sake. He, the origin of all good, is exalted above all recompence; but you can reach those who belong to his household: let not the highest among you disdain to be a 'servant to wash the feet of the 'servants of your Lord.'

But if even in these little expressions of your condescension and charity, your abilities are still too weak to keep pace with your inclination; can you relent, can you pardon for the love of God? If you cannot bestow because you are poor, or labour because you are weak; can you forgive as you yourselves are forgiven?

Yet

Yet once more, before I finally deliver this cup into your hands, never again myſelf to partake of the like refreſhment upon earth; ſince what I now ſay to you are almoſt the laſt words that I ſhall utter, the declaration of my mind at ſuch a time, my orders, injunctions now, ought to have a peculiar weight; they are my dying will and teſtament. 'This cup 'is the new teſtament' ſealed 'in my blood;' take it, to ſhew that you lay claim to the benefit of my bequeſts, and appertain to the houſhold and family of the teſtator.

You muſt continue this rite among yourſelves hereafter, when I am gone from you, and deliver it down to be obſerved to the end of the world. It is ſo ſmall a requeſt, that I cannot think any of thoſe who become my diſciples will refuſe to comply with it.

If I had required you to come together from all parts to the very place of my death, and there ſhew your remembrance of me by painful faſtings, or coſtly ſacrifices; I had but copied after the example of former inſtitutions. The whole nation almoſt of the Jews is even now, you ſee, aſſembled here at Jeruſalem to keep the Paſſover. And this is but one of the three feſtivals to be kept all at this place. The eaſier I make my commands to you, the more punctual you will be in the obſervance of them.

'To you I give my peace. Not as the world giveth,' in compliment only, and without either meaning or conſequence: I ſpeak with authority. I am ſtill that WORD by which

which the worlds were made. My peace is the pardon of your ſins, courage and conſolation under all troubles, and everlaſting ſalvation.

Farewell: I cannot talk more with you. All things are ready. I am expected by him that betrayed me: and I go to meet him, and to deliver myſelf into his hands. The *Teſtament* which I have declared, the new *Covenant* which I eſtabliſh, the *Atonement* which I have undertaken, are now to be completed and ratified, according to the appointment of Almighty God, by me in my own blood. Father, I come; to do thy will; to fulfil thy word; to bear thy wrath; to be the ſacrifice for the world; a willing ſacrifice for a world of ſinners.

Not that I am inſenſible of what is approaching: I ſee it in all it's terrors. And if the bitter cup might paſs from me! Alas! for this very cauſe came I into the world. Heavenly Father, let thy will be done. Hitherto I have in all things done thy will. I prepare now to ſuffer in obedience to it. And, oh! if any thing that I have ever done, if all that I now ſuffer, avail in thy ſight; if thou haſt ever loved me, or will grant any thing at my requeſt; Father, have mercy on the poor race of men. Pity their blindneſs; pardon their folly; lay all their iniquities upon my head.

Thus redeemed, they ſhall give thanks unto thee for endleſs ages; they ſhall be tranſlated from earth to heaven; and join with thoſe holy angels which never ſinned, in celebrating thy praiſes and performing thy pleaſure to all eternity.

SER-

SERMON II.

REV. xiii. 8.

The Lamb ſlain from the Foundation of the World.

IF the New Teſtament be true, the Old is ſo too; becauſe the New Teſtament tells us that it is. The Goſpel refers continually to the Law and the Prophets, not only as being true, but indeed as containing a capital proof of it's own divine authority. 'Search the Scriptures,' ſays our Lord to the Jews, 'for in them ye think 'ye have eternal life: and they are they which 'teſtify of me.' We cannot therefore admit the one revelation, and deny the other. They are cloſely united by Him who is the author of both: and 'what God hath joined together, 'let not man put aſunder.'

'Known unto God are all his works from 'the beginning.' As the various events which befel our heavenly Redeemer during his abode on earth, are ſaid to have come to paſs 'that 'the Scriptures might be fulfilled;' ſo on the other hand, thoſe Scriptures were therefore written, and the things recorded there were done, becauſe the ſupreme Wiſdom had fore-ordained the events that ſhould correſpond to them. The ſervices under the Moſaic law, and before it, were but 'a ſhadow of good

'things

'things to come.' The Redeemer's death was the whole meaning of every ſacrifice, in all ages: and when at laſt, 'in the fulneſs of 'time,' he was offered upon the croſs, he was 'the Lamb ſlain from the FOUNDATION OF 'THE WORLD.'

If we would underſtand any thing concerning the ſacrament of the *Lord's Supper*, we muſt read, no doubt, thoſe places in the *Goſpels* where the inſtitution is recorded, and conſider them with a very particular attention. And if there be any other paſſages of the *New Teſtament* which relate to this ſubject, it is very true that we muſt attend to them alſo.

But why are we prohibited with ſo much caution from looking any further for information? It is becauſe 'other writers who followed 'have no pretences to the ſame regard from 'us: the New Teſtament is alone to be de-'pended on: and we ought to take all our no-'tions of this duty from it.'

Not to ſtand now to diſpute about the other writers *who followed*; what, may we aſk, if we ſhould have recourſe to the writers who *went before?*

What before the inſtitution and exiſtence of the rite you are inquiring after?

Why not? The Old Teſtament was given by divine inſpiration as well as the New, and contains the religion of that people among whom our Lord was born, and lived, and taught; and muſt therefore, in all human appearance, help us greatly to comprehend the inſtructions which he delivered.

But

But this religion of the Jews was alſo, in it's nature, *preparatory* to that which he ſubſtituted in the place of it, and is intimately connected with it. Chriſt is declared to be 'the end of 'the Law;' and he came, as he tells us of himſelf, 'to fulfil it. Ye are no more ſtran-'gers and foreigners,' ſays St. Paul to the Gentiles at Epheſus, 'but fellow citizens with the 'Saints, and of the houſhold of God; and are 'built upon the foundation of the Apoſtles 'and Prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the 'chief corner ſtone.'

Theſe reaſons are general, and extend to other doctrines and duties of Chriſtianity. But the inſtitution of the *Lord's Supper* was attended with ſuch particular circumſtances as muſt lead us inevitably to the books of the Old Teſtament for our information, and ſuggeſt to us that, very poſſibly, even the eſſence of this duty cannot be underſtood without them.

'As they were eating, Jeſus took bread and 'bleſſed it.—As they were eating.'—Was this a common meal: or was it not rather the celebration of a ſacred rite? Will you not permit us to inquire concerning the time, place, and occaſion of this ſolemnity? Muſt we ſtart at once from the very words of conſecration? As if never any thing had been done or written, from the beginning of the world to the then preſent moment, which could relate to that tranſaction: as if this new *inſtitution* could have no connection with any other duties or inſtitutions; and the whole Jewiſh diſpenſation

tion was not accompliſhed but deſtroyed; and the Law and the Prophets, and all the books of the old revelation, had been utterly annihilated, and ſhould be henceforth never heard of.

Nay, if we will permit ourſelves to hear all that our Lord was pleaſed to ſay even while he was ſitting at that very laſt ſupper, where he inſtituted this holy rite; we muſt either be already inſtructed in the religion of the Jews, as the perſons all were to whom he ſpoke, or we cannot help aſking ſome queſtions, which can only be anſwered out of the Law of Moſes.

'He ſat down, and the twelve Apoſtles 'with him. And he ſaid unto them, With 'deſire I have deſired to eat this Paſſover with 'you, before I ſuffer.'

If our Lord, in his heavenly wiſdom, ſo paſſionately longed for this Paſſover, that he deſired only to live till he had kept it; will you not let us aſk what this Paſſover was, which he judged of ſuch importance? Perhaps it had ſome relation to his death; perhaps to the holy rite he was going to appoint; poſſibly, all the three are eſſentially connected.

The Jewiſh *Paſſover* was one of the moſt conſiderable of the Sacrifices required in the old Teſtament: and St. Paul calls our Lord himſelf by this very name; 'Chriſt our Paſſover is 'ſacrificed for us.'

The great deliverance of the Jewiſh nation had been effected by means of the firſt Paſſover. 'Ye ſhall kill the Paſſover, and ſtrike 'the lintel and the two ſide poſts with the 'blood;

'blood; and the Lord will paſs through and 'ſmite the Egyptians; and when he ſeeth the 'blood, the Lord will paſs over the door, and 'not ſuffer the deſtroyer to come into your 'houſes to ſmite you.'

This event our Lord and his Apoſtles were now ſolemnly commemorating. When therefore 'as they were eating' the ſacrifice of the Paſſover, 'Jeſus took bread and bleſſed it, and 'brake it, and gave it to the diſciples and ſaid, 'Take, eat, this is my body; and the cup, 'ſaying, This is my blood;' he refers to the occaſion preſent, and the objects before them: which are not induſtriouſly to be removed out of ſight, but all taken into the account, if we deſire to comprehend the fulneſs of his meaning.

It is as if he had ſaid, You are eating the fleſh of this lamb: the blood of it has been ſhed at the altar to make atonement. But you muſt now know that theſe things are but ſhadows. I am the great ſacrifice, and my blood the true atonement. Here, eat this bread, drink of this cup, conſidering them as repreſenting my body and blood; and you ſhall be partakers of what was always the end and meaning of the legal Paſſover; of this Body which is juſt now going to be offered in ſacrifice to God for the ſins of all men, of this Blood, 'without the ſhedding of which there is no re-'miſſion.'

Can we avoid obſerving here the remarkable diſparity between the ſervices required in the Law,

Law, and the rites appointed in the Goſpel? How laborious the former, and ſtill obſcure! how ſhort, yet clear; how eaſy, yet how ſignificant the latter! Our Lord makes his commands as light as poſſible to us; and takes the heavy and painful part of his religion upon himſelf. Inſtead of the myſterious and bloody rite of circumciſion, he has appointed the plain and expreſſive ceremony of waſhing his converts in pure water. In the place of all the coſtly ſacrifices of the Law, he has offered indeed his own body upon the croſs; but he requires only of us to eat bread and drink wine in remembrance of him.

We can now ſerve God, and be accepted by him, without bringing with us any other offering, beſides that of a devout and upright heart. 'The hour now is, when the true 'worſhippers worſhip the Father in ſpirit and 'in truth: for the Father ſeeketh ſuch to wor-'ſhip him.'

If he required ſuch a multiplicity of ceremonies, and expenſive offerings and ſervices from the Jews, it was for wiſe reaſons, no doubt, but not becauſe he himſelf delighted in them. God did ever eſteem innocence before the moſt coſtly ſacrifices. Even when he demanded thoſe external performances, he would not accept them without a good life.

'To what purpoſe is the multitude of your 'ſacrifices unto me? ſaith the Lord: I am 'full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the 'fat of fed beaſts. Waſh ye, make you clean.

'Ceaſe

'Ceaſe to do evil, learn to do well; relieve 'the oppreſſed, judge the fatherleſs, plead for 'the widow.' Theſe parts of the old covenant never decay; but are the great duties of Chriſtians ſtill under the Goſpel. How near is the reſemblance between the Prophet and the Apoſtle! 'Pure religion and undefiled before 'God and the Father is this, To viſit the fa-'therleſs and widows in their affliction, and 'to keep himſelf unſpotted from the world.'

SERMON III.

1 COR. xi. 26.

For as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do ſhew the Lord's death, till he come.

THE Law and the Goſpel are ſo ordered by the Divine Providence, as to reflect light upon one another; and are neither of them ſeen to advantage ſeparately. If you look at the Law without a reference to Chriſt, you ſee a multitude of means only without the end; a ſhadow without ſubſtance; a letter without the meaning and ſpirit. Your eyes are blinded by a veil hanging before them, as St. Paul tells us, the minds

minds of the Jews were, and as they continue to be; 'for until this day remaineth the ſame 'veil untaken away in the reading of the Old 'Teſtament.'

On the other hand neither can we well underſtand the accompliſhment of all theſe things in the Goſpel, without ſome knowledge of the antecedent diſpenſation. It adds beauty to both to ſee the correſpondence that is between them; the gradual progreſs out of darkneſs into *the marvellous light*; the diſtant deſigns that have been anſwered, the myſteries unfolded, the prophecies fulfilled, and earthly types and ſymbols advanced into heavenly realities.

St. Paul indeed, having called the Law a Schoolmaſter, doth ſay, that 'after faith is 'come, we are no longer under a ſchoolmaſter.' It is true, we are not *under* it; not obliged to live by it's rules, and at this time to practiſe it's rites and ceremonies. But as the Apoſtle had acknowledged that it was our ſchoolmaſter 'to bring us to Chriſt;' we may be content to receive this benefit from it, and become the better proficients in Chriſtianity for having firſt imbibed the rudiments of the Law.

It is through the inſtruction of that Schoolmaſter, the Law, that we learn to comprehend in ſome meaſure, (for it is ſtill a myſtery even to Angels,) the great doctrine revealed in the Goſpel, 'of the ſufferings of Chriſt, and 'the glory that ſhould follow:' that 'God is 'in Chriſt reconciling the world unto himſelf;' and this reconciliation is 'by his death: that he

'is

'is the Lamb of God, which taketh away the 'sin of the world; an offering and a sacrifice 'to God; set forth to be a propitiation, through 'faith in his blood.'

You are made to see here almost of yourselves, the necessity of the death of Christ. He could be no sacrifice, according to the pattern of those under the Law without it. 'It 'is the blood that maketh an atonement for 'the soul.' This we learn of Moses; and no longer wonder that the prayer even of the only begotten should return into his own bosom. 'Father, save me from this hour: but for this 'cause came I unto this hour.' He was born into the world for this end, to suffer, and to be put to death: he took up his life in order thus to lay it down; and was made a living man, for this very purpose, to be crucified and slain.

Did I say the prayer of the Redeemer returned unanswered? He himself retracts it. He could have called down legions of Angels to his own deliverance, and the destruction of his murderers. 'But how then shall the scriptures 'be fulfilled, that thus it must be?'

'If Christ be not risen, then is our preach-'ing vain, and your faith is also vain.' And if he had not suffered on the cross, the predictions of the ancient Scriptures, *beginning*, as it is written, 'at Moses and all the prophets,' the types in the Levitical service, the great Passover itself, and every sacrifice under the Law, had been insignificant and vain: no atonement had been made for the sins of man;

and the *judgment* had both *come*, and for ever reſted 'upon all men to condemnation.'

'For it is not poſſible that the blood of bulls, 'and of goats ſhould take away ſins:' they received their whole virtue and efficacy from that 'one ſacrifice offered for ſins for ever, *by him* 'who loved us, and gave himſelf for us, an 'offering and a ſacrifice to God for a ſweet 'ſmelling ſavour.'

'Chriſt our Paſſover is ſacrificed for us; 'and *our* redemption *is* through his blood. 'By *this we have* juſtification, ſanctification, 'peace.' The Scripture mentions every one of theſe, expreſsly aſcribing them to the ſame cauſe. It is he 'that loved us, and waſh-'ed us from our ſins in his blood. *And* being 'juſtified by his blood, we are ſaved from 'wrath through him;' or, as it might be rendered, through *it*. But there is no difference: as it is he who hath *purchaſed the Church*; ſo the price he has paid for it is *his own blood*. The New Teſtament, you ſee, teaches this doctrine in places innumerable; and the whole tenor of the Old, not only implies it, but has hardly any other meaning.

When therefore, in conformity to our Lord's inſtitution at his laſt ſupper, we eat bread and drink wine, as he hath commanded, in remembrance of him; it is in remembrance of his death. It is his death, his crucifixion, his wounded body and his blood, that are the awful objects then ſet before us.

God

God forbid that any Chriſtian ſhould undervalue the *teaching* of our Lord. His commands are neceſſary to be obeyed: and it will be found at laſt, that it is in vain to call him our 'Lord, 'if we do not the things which he ſaith.' His incarnation, his birth, life, miracles, and reſurrection, are all of them proper objects for our frequent and devout meditations; and can never ſurely be thought of, without the warmeſt feelings, and the beſt reſolutions.

But yet, when we come to partake of our Lord's ſupper, according to his appointment; it is not any of theſe, that is the direct and immediate object of our attention at the time; but his ſufferings and death. He is ſet before us, in this ſacrament, as 'crucified *and* dying for 'us. As often as ye eat this bread, and drink 'this cup, ye do ſhew the Lord's death till he 'come.'

This preciſe conſideration, I ſhould make no ſcruple to ſay, is eſſential to the right diſcharge of the duty, and to every *true account* of it. If you take upon you at any time to enumerate the particulars that muſt concur in order to the performing of this duty, agreeably to the end of the inſtitution, the remembrance of the *death* of Chriſt is always to be *one*, it is to be the *chief* of them.

It is not a right account, for it is not a perfect one, to ſay, that 'the communicant in a 'ſerious ſenſe of his relation to Chriſt, as his 'diſciple, is to eat bread and drink wine in 'remembrance of him as a perſon' corporally

abſent: abſent he might be, had he never died: we are to do it in remembrance of him, as one who *ſuffered* in our ſtead, and was crucified for us. To leave this out, is to let drop what is indiſpenſably neceſſary, and turn aſide our attention from the very point on which it ſhould be fixed above all others.

To ſee this, indeed, it is not neceſſary to go farther than the new Teſtament, 'As often as 'ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do 'ſhew the Lord's DEATH till he come;' than the four Goſpels; nay, if you will bind us to them, than the very words of the inſtitution, 'This is my body, which is given for you.' Given! how? to be put to death, no doubt; crucified for your ſake. St. Paul's words are, 'which is broken for you:' delivered up to ſuffer violence on your account. And, 'this 'cup is the new Teſtament of my blood, which 'is ſhed for you.' Or as the words are in another Evangeliſt, 'this is my blood of the new 'Teſtament, which is ſhed for many, for the 'remiſſion of ſins.'

Look up therefore, Chriſtians, in the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, to 'the offering of 'the body of Jeſus Chriſt once for all:' look to him as dying for the remiſſion of your ſins; waſhing them away in his precious blood; ſuffering that you may be ſaved. And while you are kneeling under his croſs, touched with the utmoſt poſſible ſenſe of God's love who gave his only begotten Son, and affected with ſentiments of the moſt tender devotion to him

who

who gave himſelf for you, embrace alſo with your good will all mankind, whom he loved, for his ſake. Then riſe up to the ſober continual practice of every thing, that is good, and excellent, and praiſe worthy, and conformable to ſuch ſentiments and affections, and the obligations laid upon you by his infinite love. Remember that you are to live, as well as pray piouſly. Let the devout worſhip of God be accompanied with a careful obedience to his commands: and then you are 'perfect and 'entire, wanting nothing.'

Thus ſhall theſe ſervices and ſacraments be fulfilled to you in a manner not now to be comprehended. You ſhall be admitted into thoſe manſions which Chriſt is gone into heaven to prepare; and 'eat and drink at his table in his 'kingdom.'

SER-

SERMON IV.

HEB. x. 8, 9, 10.

Above when he ſaid, ſacrifice, and offering, and burnt offerings, and offering for ſin, thou wouldeſt not, neither hadſt pleaſure therein; which are offered by the law: then ſaid he, lo, I come to do thy will, O God: he taketh away the firſt, that he may eſtabliſh the ſecond. By the which will we are ſanctified, through the offering of the Body of Jeſus Chriſt, once for all.

THE religious worſhip of moſt nations in the world anciently conſiſted much of Sacrifices. That of the Jews in particular was almoſt wholly taken up with them. And it is certain, whether we can ſee the reaſons of it or no, or whatever reaſons we may fancy we ſee againſt it, that this way of worſhip was acceptable to the Supreme Being, from the days of Noah, at leaſt, if not from Adam, to the death of Chriſt.

Poſſibly you can ſee no reaſon why the death of Chriſt ſhould recommend to the divine favour any other perſon than himſelf: can you tell me why the death of an *Animal* had ever any ſuch efficacy? It is written, you know; 'for I ſpeak, *as the Apoſtle did*, to them that 'know the law, *and that* conſent unto it, 'that

'that it is good) The life of the flesh is in 'the blood, and I have given it you upon the 'altar to make an atonement for your souls: 'for it is the *blood* that maketh an *atone-* 'ment for the soul.'

Not pretending therefore to form to ourselves a religion with which we will require our Maker to be content, but acquiescing with that which he is pleased to give us, though it be, not indeed contrary to our reason, God forbid, yet in some particulars wonderful even to astonishment; let us see what light may be reflected upon the Christian Faith from this part of the religion of the Jews.

The offerings which they made of Animals to be slain, may be comprehended most commodiously, I think, under * three general classes, to which most of the particulars will be, in some sort, reducible. At least, there are three species of them very conspicuous, in many places of Scripture mentioned together, so as to be distinguished from each other, and in some, so as to be put for the whole number.

In the 40th Psalm, according to the translation in our bible, we read, 'Sacrifice and offering 'thou didst not desire; burnt offering and sin 'offering hast thou not required.' Sacrifice and offering :—

* When *Josephus* divides the Jewish sacrifices into *two* sorts only, he considers not the *occasion*, the *intention*, the *order*, or a multitude of other differences; but merely this circumstance, whether the whole Sacrifice were, or were not, consumed on the altar. Antiq. Jud. Lib. 3. c. 9.

offering:—That which is here ſtyled *offering*, is to be taken out of the number, being, as appears plainly in the original מנחה, not a ſacrifice of any animal, but an *oblation*, conſiſting of flour, oil, frankincenſe, and ſalt, and commonly called a *meat offering*. It ſhould have been ſo rendered here, and indeed is ſo in the older tranſlation of the Pſalms, generally uſed in the divine ſervice, where it ſtands thus; 'Sacrifice and meat offering thou wouldeſt not: 'burnt offerings, and ſacrifice for ſins haſt thou 'not required.'

Beſides therefore the *meat offering*, which was of flour; of animal offerings, you ſee, here are three ſorts enumerated, 'Sacrifice, 'burnt offering, *and* ſin offering.' They are not thus put down caſually, but with care, and quoted accordingly with the ſame exactneſs by the Apoſtle to the Hebrews; 'Sacrifice and of-'fering thou wouldeſt not; in burnt offerings 'and ſacrifices for ſin thou haſt had no plea-'ſure.' And again, no more than two verſes afterwards, arguing from this paſſage in the Pſalms, he repeats every one of the ſame words: 'Sacrifice and offering, and burnt offerings, 'and offerings for ſin thou wouldeſt not.'

Now the deſign of the Apoſtle is to teach us, that the whole collection of the Jewiſh ſacrifices, conſiſting principally of three diſtinguiſhed kinds, with the oblations that accompanied ſome of them, were ſuperſeded and aboliſhed; having anſwered the end for which they were originally intended; having prefigured, in ſuch

ſuch meaſure as it pleaſed God, the great ſacrifice of the Redeemer of mankind, and being fully and finally accompliſhed in his death upon the Croſs.

'Above when he ſaid, Sacrifice and offering, and burnt offerings, and offering for ſin thou wouldeſt not, neither hadſt pleaſure therein, which are offered by the Law: then ſaid he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the firſt that he may eſtabliſh the ſecond. By the which will we are ſanctified, through the offering of the body of Jeſus Chriſt, once for all.'

Upon ſome ſolemn occaſions the Jewiſh Law directed theſe three ſorts of ſacrifice to be all offered in the following order *.

In the firſt place was preſented the 'offering for ſin,' by him regularly that offered it. He laid his hand upon the head of the ſin offering; which was then ſlain beſide the altar, and the fat indeed burnt upon it, but the body was burnt without the camp: the perſon employed in the removal of it, being ſometimes ſpoken

* There are indeed many paſſages in the Levitical Law where the ſacrifices, which a worſhipper brings to be offered, are ſet down in a different order: but it does not certainly follow that even in thoſe inſtances they were offered in a different order by the prieſt. It is written Numb. vi. 14. *He ſhall offer his offering to the Lord, one He Lamb of the firſt year without blemiſh for a* burnt offering, *and one Ewe Lamb of the firſt year without blemiſh for a* ſin offering, *and one Ram without blemiſh for* peace offerings; but you will find v. 16, 17. the Prieſt is directed to arrange theſe very offerings in the order I have mentioned. *And the prieſt ſhall bring them before the Lord, and ſhall offer his* ſin offering, *and his* burnt offering, *and he ſhall offer the Ram for a ſacrifice of* peace offerings *unto the Lord.*

ſpoken of as defiled at ſecond hand by it's imputed uncleanneſs. 'He ſhall waſh his clothes, 'and bathe his fleſh in water, and afterwards 'he ſhall come into the camp*.'

Next, the worſhippers brought their 'burnt 'offering,' as they had done the other, and laying their hands upon it's head preſented it to God. The blood was ſprinkled upon the altar, and the fleſh all conſumed on it. No part of it was eaten by any one. It was 'an 'offering made by fire, of a ſweet ſavour un-'to the Lord.'

Of this ſort were the *two Lambs*, which were offered every day, the one in the morning, the other towards the evening; and along with each of them flour, oil, and wine for a meat, and a drink offering.

Of this ſort are thought to have been the ſacrifices of the *Patriarchs*, from the flood to the days

* When another beaſt upon the ſame occaſion is repreſented as bearing away the iniquities of the nation into a land not inhabited, the meaning ſeems to be, that the ſins expiated by the ſolemnities of that day, ſhall no more be remembered than the beaſt ſhall be again found which is eſcaped into the wilderneſs, Levit. xxi 21, 22. The phraſe in the 10th verſe, *to make atonement with him*, is a miſtake in the tranſlation, and ſhould not be, *with*, but, *over* him: the word עליו is often uſed after כפר, but never, I believe, in that ſenſe, in all the Old Teſtament. For the reſt, we are not to wonder that by the Jewiſh ritual the atonement was ſtill carried on through ſo many ceremonies, or even ſo many ſacrifices, one after another, as if it were never complete. It is from a ſimilar circumſtance to this, that the Apoſtle to the Hebrews (chap. x.) draws his fine argument for the imperfection and inſufficiency of that whole diſpenſation.

days of *Moſes*. Such was that of *Noah*. He ‘ builded an altar unto the Lord, and took of ‘ every clean beaſt, and of every clean fowl, ‘ and offered' burnt offerings ‘ upon the altar'. Such was the offering of *Iſaac*, or ſuch it was ordered to be, and ſuch was that of the Ram in his ſtead. ‘ Take now thy ſon, thine only ‘ ſon, whom thou loveſt, and get thee into the ‘ land of Moriah, and offer him there for a' burnt offering.—‘ And Abraham took the Ram, ‘ and offered him up for a burnt offering, in ‘ the ſtead of his ſon.'

After the ſin offerings, and burnt offerings, there ſtill remained one ſpecies of ſacrifices more, and theſe were called the ſacrifices of *peace offerings*.

Of theſe there were various ſorts, which we need not ſpecify, this principal circumſtance being common to them all; that, part being firſt given to the *altar*, and part to thoſe who miniſtered at it, the reſt of the ſacrifice appertained to the *worſhippers*.

At their firſt approach with their offerings for ſin, they appeared as enemies or rebels; yet repenting, acknowledging the puniſhment which they had deſerved, and ſubmitting, by ſubſtitution, to the infliction of it.

The burnt offering which came next, was a tribute to the heavenly king, a token of their acknowledged allegiance, and renewed loyalty; and placed the worſhippers in the light of faithful ſubjects, under his ſovereign government, and omnipotent protection.

Laſtly,

Laſtly, having preſented their ſacrifice of peace offerings, they became, as it were, of the number of his friends and family; feaſting of the ſame meat, and being gueſts at one common table with the Divinity whom they adored.

Now as all theſe ſacrifices, conſidered as types, are accompliſhed, and the beneficial intention of every one of them finally anſwered, by the ſacrifice of our Lord Chriſt upon the croſs; we are not to wonder if we find him compared in the new Teſtament to every one of them. And if one part of any ſuch compariſon ſhould lead us to think of one of theſe kinds of ſacrifice, and ſome words that follow rather turn our thoughts to another, neither is this any mighty difficulty, ſince he was prefigured by them all.

St. Paul ſpeaks of our Lord as an offering for *ſin*. * 'That he might reconcile both' (Jews and Gentiles,) 'unto God in one body 'by the croſs:—for through him we both have 'an acceſs by one ſpirit unto the Father.' If there can be any doubt of this, it will be made plain by the parallel words of St. Peter. * 'Chriſt hath once ſuffered for ſins, the juſt 'for the unjuſt, that he might bring us to 'God.'

Yet,

* Ἀποκαλλάξῃ τὰς ἀμφοτέρους ἐν ἑνὶ σώματι τῷ Θεῷ διὰ τοῦ σταυροῦ—Δι' αὐτοῦ ἔχομεν τὴν προσαγωγήν.

* Χριστὸς ἅπαξ περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν ἔπαθε, δίκαιος ὑπὲρ ἀδίκων, ἵνα ἡμᾶς προσαγάγῃ, τῷ Θεῷ.

Yet, the same Apostle St. Paul, and in the same Epistle, representing our Lord again as a sacrifice, makes choice of such terms as are not commonly applied to sacrifices for sin, but to *peace* offerings, and the oblations that accompanied them: † 'Christ also hath loved us, and 'hath given himself for us, an offering, and 'a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling sa-'vour.' *An offering* or oblation; it is the *meat offering* of flour and oil which accompanied the burnt offerings, and peace offerings, but not those that were made for sin: 'and a 'sacrifice;' with us the word sacrifice is general, but the original word, in this place, properly denotes the sacrifice of *peace* offerings: and lastly he adds, 'for a sweet smelling sa-'vour;' which expression is not applicable to the sin offering *, but is common, and continually in use concerning *burnt* offerings, and the sacrifices of peace offerings.

Let us with devout thankfulness reflect that our Saviour Christ did that truly and fully for us, and for all men, which was done, in part, or in shadow, for the Jews by all their oblations

† Παρέδωκεν ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν προσφορὰν καὶ θυσίαν τῷ Θεῷ, εἰς ὀσμὴν εὐωδίας.

* I know not that there is above one place in all the Old Testament, in which mention is ever made of the *sweet smelling savour* in the case of a sacrifice for sin: and there it is applied to a certain part separated from the rest of the sin offering, and treated, and spoken of expressly, as if it had appertained to a peace offering. *He shall take away all the fat thereof, as the fat is taken away from off the sacrifice of peace offerings, and the priest shall burn it upon the altar for a sweet savour.*

tions and ſacrifices. 'He is the *propitiation* for 'our ſins: through him we have *acceſs* to the 'Father, *and* are no more ſtrangers and fo-'reigners, but *fellow citizens* with the ſaints, 'and of the *houſhold* of God.'

It hath pleaſed the Father of all, in the depth of his unſearchable wiſdom, out of the bowels of his infinite love, to effect the recovery of fallen man, through the interpoſition of his only begotten Son. To his wonderful incarnation, to his holy life and doctrine, his meritorious and bloody death and paſſion, his powerful interceſſion, and the preſence and help of that Divine Comforter whom he hath ſent down to us in his ſtead, is owing every ſtep we make in our progreſs from ſin and miſery to everlaſting glory and virtue.

'We were by nature the children of wrath.' But he hath 'aboliſhed in his fleſh the en-'mity: and now in Chriſt Jeſus, ye, who 'ſometimes were far off, are made nigh by the 'blood of Chriſt:' not only ſubjects of God's kingdom, and ſervants in his houſhold; but 'predeſtinated unto the adoption of children 'by Jeſus Chriſt. Wherefore thou art no 'more a ſervant, but a ſon: and if a ſon, 'then an heir of God through Chriſt. He 'that ſpared not his own ſon, but delivered 'him up for us all, how ſhall he not with him 'alſo freely give us all things?'

Inſtead of diſputing with preſumptuous blindneſs againſt the method which God hath choſen for the ſalvation of mankind; let us be

wiſe

wiſe enough to accept his mercy with obedient thankfulneſs. Is it for us to ſay, on what conditions it is fit for God to forgive ſins? Or do we know all the poſſible efficacy of the death of his Son?

'The word was with God, and was God; 'and the word was made fleſh. And as many 'as received him, to them gave he power to 'become the ſons of God.' Is there nothing in all this, but what muſt needs be plain and obvious to the meaneſt capacity?

The minuteſt inſect, the ſimpleſt vegetable, every particle of inanimate matter contains in it's nature an abyſs of wonders, which no human underſtanding can fathom. And is there nothing of Myſtery in the incarnation of the Son of God? Can no benefit redound to mankind through his death, but what we muſt needs be able to trace through all the darkneſs of the divine counſels?

'All things have I ſeen in the days of my 'vanity:' the upright man 'periſheth in his 'righteouſneſs:' yet God is juſt. How much more, when He who loved us waſhed us in his blood, and was made a willing ſacrifice for the ſins of the whole world?

Even in natural ſubjects, the perſon who meets with no difficulties, learns nothing. How much more in the 'deep things of God? 'If any man thinketh that he knoweth any 'thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought 'to know.'

SER-

SERMON V.

ROM. v. 8.

God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet ſinners, Chriſt died for us.

THOUGH 'Chriſt is the end of the Law,' and he was accordingly repreſented with more or leſs clearneſs, in all it's offerings; yet was there one kind of thoſe offerings, and a particular one of the kind, by which he was prefigured in a more diſtinguiſhed manner: theſe were the *offerings for ſin*, and that ſolemn one in particular, which was preſented in the name of the whole Jewiſh Nation upon the great day of the *annual Expiation*.

That ſin offering being ſet apart 'to make 'an atonement becauſe of the uncleanneſs of 'the children of Iſrael, and becauſe of their 'tranſgreſſions in all their ſins,' the body of the beaſt itſelf was ordered to be removed, as a thing unclean, from the midſt of the congregation, and burnt *without the camp*; but the high Prieſt was commanded to 'take of the 'blood, and bring it within the veil, and 'ſprinkle it on the mercy ſeat, and before the 'mercy ſeat.'

All which is thus repreſented and applied by the Apoſtle. 'The firſt covenant had ordinan-'ces of divine ſervice, and a worldly ſanctuary. 'There

'There was a tabernacle made, the firſt, where-
'in was the candleſtick and the tables, and the
'ſhew bread, which is called the ſanctuary.
'And after the ſecond veil, the tabernacle
'which is called the holieſt of all: which had
'the ark of the covenant, and over it the che-
'rubims of glory ſhadowing the mercy ſeat.
'Now the prieſts went always into the firſt ta-
'bernacle; but into the ſecond went the High
'Prieſt alone, once every year, not without
'blood, which he offered for himſelf, and for
'the errors of the people. The Holy Ghoſt
'this ſignifying, that the way into the holieſt
'of all was not yet made manifeſt, while as the
'firſt tabernacle was yet ſtanding. Which was
'a figure for the time then preſent. But
'Chriſt being come, an High Prieſt of good
'things to come, by his own blood entered in
'once into the holy place, having obtained
'eternal redemption for us. Not into the holy
'places made with hands, which are the figures
'of the true, but into heaven itſelf, now to
'appear in the preſence of God for us. Nor
'yet that he ſhould offer himſelf often, as the
'High Prieſt entereth into the holy place every
'year, with the blood of others; but now,
'once, hath he appeared to put away ſin by
'the ſacrifice of himſelf.—Chriſt was once of-
'fered to bear the ſins of many.—This man,
'after he had offered one ſacrifice for ſins, for
'ever ſat down on the right hand of God.—
'The bodies of thoſe beaſts whoſe blood is
'brought into the ſanctuary by the High Prieſt

'for ſin, are burnt without the camp. Where-
'fore Jeſus alſo, that he might ſanctify the
'people with his own blood, ſuffered without
'the gate.'

Thus not only the death of our Lord, but his entrance into heaven, and the interceſſion 'he ever liveth to make' for us, were exhibited circumſtantially, as the Apoſtle has ſhewn us at large, by the annual offering for ſin, and the ceremonies attending it. Yet, as *all* the ſacrifices under the Law, of whatever kind, were typical of the death of Chriſt; ſo, however they might differ in other reſpects, there was one ſignal circumſtance common to all the *three* great claſſes of them, which was eminently figurative of the great ſacrifice upon the croſs; *Atonement* was made in every one of them by *blood*.

'For the Law could never with thoſe ſacri-
'fices which they offered make the comers
'thereunto perfect.' The Law ſeems to have been ſenſible, as it were, itſelf, of the incompleteneſs of it's own work. The 'ſacrifice for 'ſin,' in the regular courſe, preceded the reſt: it was preſented, and ſlain. But the worſhippers were not ſo thoroughly purified, as not to want ſtill further purgation.

After the offering for ſin, the *burnt offering* next muſt yield it's blood, not only to be ſhed, but to be ſprinkled upon the altar: and this offering is expreſsly ſaid to make atonement. 'He ſhall put his hand upon the head 'of the burnt offering; and it ſhall be ac-
'cepted

'cepted for him to make atonement. And he 'ſhall kill the bullock before the Lord, and the 'prieſts ſhall bring the blood, and ſprinkle the 'blood round about upon the altar.'

Nay, the ſame ceremony, and for the ſame purpoſe, was ſtill to be repeated in the ſacrifices of 'peace offerings. Whatſoever man 'there be that offereth a burnt offering, or' ſacrifice, (that is a peace offering) 'and bring 'it not unto the door of the tabernacle to 'offer it unto the Lord, that man ſhall be cut 'off. And whatſoever man eateth any manner 'of blood, I will ſet my face againſt that ſoul 'that eateth blood, and will cut him off. For 'the life of the fleſh is in the blood; and I have 'given it to you upon the altar, to make an 'atonement for your ſouls: for it is the blood 'that maketh an atonement for the ſoul.'

'The wages of ſin is death. Repent and 'believe the Goſpel,' and the death of the ſacrifice becomes the life of the ſinner.

But this is *Judaiſm.* It is what God hath been pleaſed to make it. The religion of the Jews is not to be utterly forgotten; the fabrick of Chriſt's religion reſts upon it. 'He came 'not to deſtroy the Law, but fulfil.'

But you ſee no reaſon in ſuch an inſtitution. 'We preach Chriſt crucified; unto the Jews a 'ſtumbling block, and unto the Greeks fooliſh-'neſs: but the fooliſhneſs of God is wiſer than 'men.'

Yes, you can find wiſdom in Chriſtianity, when it is explained properly. Chriſt came to

give leſſons in moral virtue; and died to teach men patience.

What virtues were taught by all the ſacrifices in the law of Moſes? what example was ſet by thoſe ſufferings? Alas! though the offerer might be guilty, the victim was innocent. And could this be right, according to your rules of reaſon? Should not the guilty ſuffer, and the innocent be unpuniſhed? What crime had the Lamb committed, that it's blood ſhould be ſhed at God's altar? Or which way could the ſinner be the better for it? Is there any efficacy, comprehenſible by human reaſon, in the blood of a beaſt to waſh away the guilt of a man?

You will think of a ſuitable anſwer on your part; for to us it is ſufficient, that God ſo ordered it. Till Chriſt came, this figure of his death was effectual by God's appointment. It was his pleaſure; and his will is a reaſon. He hath ſaid it, and we are ſatisfied. 'The life is 'in the blood, and I have given it to you upon 'the altar to make atonement for your ſouls: 'for it is the blood that maketh an atonement 'for the ſoul.' And again by the Apoſtle, 'without ſhedding of blood is no remiſſion.'

We ſee therefore no neceſſity to have recourſe to metaphors on this occaſion. The ſacrifices commanded in Leviticus were ſurely not metaphorical: and the efficacy of them in the expiation of ſin, to ſay the leaſt, is as hard to comprehend as that of the death of Chriſt. It remains therefore entirely credible that the death of our Lord was a Sacrifice to

Almighty

Almighty God, making atonement for the ſins of the world. It was typically repreſented by all the ſacrifices of the Jews, but moſt eminently by the ſacrifices for ſin; and among them with the moſt elaborate ſolemnity by the *annual ſin offering* made for the whole nation.

It is but a very little way that the underſtanding of man, while he is here on earth, is able to advance in the knowledge of heavenly things. 'The ſufferings of Chriſt, and the 'glory to follow, the preaching of the Goſpel, 'with the Holy Ghoſt ſent down from heaven, 'are things which the Angels deſire to look 'into.' The conceit, that on ſubjects ſo awful, or on any ſubjects, nothing can be true, that lies beyond the limits of our comprehenſion, if it do not take the road of enthuſiaſm, will naturally lead us, either to diſbelieve the divine revelation, or, which is much the ſame, to explain it into nothing.

'Great is the myſtery of Godlineſs!' Far too great for the graſp of our knowledge; we can aſpire towards it only with our heart and affections.

This acquaintance with ſo divine a Myſtery we ſhall do well, however unworthy, to deſire, and cultivate.

'For this cauſe, I bow my knees unto the 'Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, of whom 'the whole family in heaven and earth is nam-'ed, that he would grant you, according to 'the riches of his glory, to be ſtrengthened 'with might by his Spirit, in the inner man, 'that

'that Chriſt may dwell in your hearts by faith; 'that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 'may be able to comprehend, with all ſaints, 'and know the love of Chriſt, which paſſeth 'knowledge;' which they only know, who themſelves are 'rooted and grounded in love.'

The amazing, unſearchable, riches of love, in the breaſt of the Almighty Father, which moved him to give his *only begotten*, in whom he was always well pleaſed, for wretched men, who had offended him; that unparalleled and aſtoniſhing affection, which induced the glorious Son of God to become a man and a ſacrifice, to bear himſelf the puniſhment of our ſins, and by his Holy Spirit to help our infirmities, is never perhaps to be underſtood fully, I do not ſay by man, but by any created Being. The holy Trinity alone knows what it is to love in ſuch a manner as this. For *God*, ſays the Scripture, 'is Love. He that dwelleth 'in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.'

The neareſt and beſt Idea of this love of God to men, is that which is in his breaſt, who knows what it is, to love God. The learned and ingenious, the men of brighteſt parts or deepeſt erudition, theſe are not the perſons who have the beſt comprehenſion of the Divine Nature; but the humble, the devout, the ſelf denying, who are the moſt dead to their own deſires, and the moſt inflamed with *love* to *God* and *man*.

For theſe two are always to go together. They always in reality do ſo: and where they are

are not both, there is neither. The beloved diſciple, ſtrongly touched with this divine ſentiment, hath told us, that 'If a man ſay, I 'love God, and hateth his brother, he is a 'liar.'

Alas! we forget, ſurely, when we entertain ſuch warm, and various, and never dying animoſities, againſt our fellow creatures, and fellow Chriſtians, we forget, that the love of God was a love to ſinners.

That He ſhould love his own, and only begotten Son, who was 'the brightneſs of his 'glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon;' that he ſhould behold with ſome complacence and ſatisfaction thoſe high orders of intellectual Beings, who ſerve around his throne, and never tranſgreſſed at any time his commandment, is, as we ſhould think, natural: it would be no wonder to us. But we know little of that love. 'God commendeth his love 'to us in that, while we were yet ſinners, 'Chriſt died for us.'

The love of God to man, was love to an enemy; an obliged, dependant, beloved, inſenſible, and ungrateful enemy. Oh! if we have any ſenſe of God's love, we ſhall never hereafter talk of our enemies. We can have no enemies, none that we ſhall ever conſent to treat as ſuch, if we have the leaſt glimpſe of what is meant by God's love to us, or any ſpark of love to him.

It is only to be added, for the concluſion of all, that as love to God implies love to men,

ſo

ſo alſo it involves in it, or it is ſure to bring along with it, obedience to his commandments. The ſame divine Apoſtle, who knew ſo well, teaches us, that 'this is the love of God, that 'we keep his commandments.'

Whatever our imaginations may be, whatever our ſentiments, or ſenſations; there is no ſecurity or comfort for us, if we continue under the dominion of ſin. Becauſe God loved us while we were yet enemies, ſhall we ſtill offend him, and yet pretend to love him?

'Many will ſay to me in that day, Lord, 'Lord, have we not propheſied in thy name? 'and in thy name have caſt out devils? and 'in thy name have done many wonderful 'works? And then will I profeſs unto them, 'I never knew you: depart from me, ye that 'work iniquity.'

FINIS.